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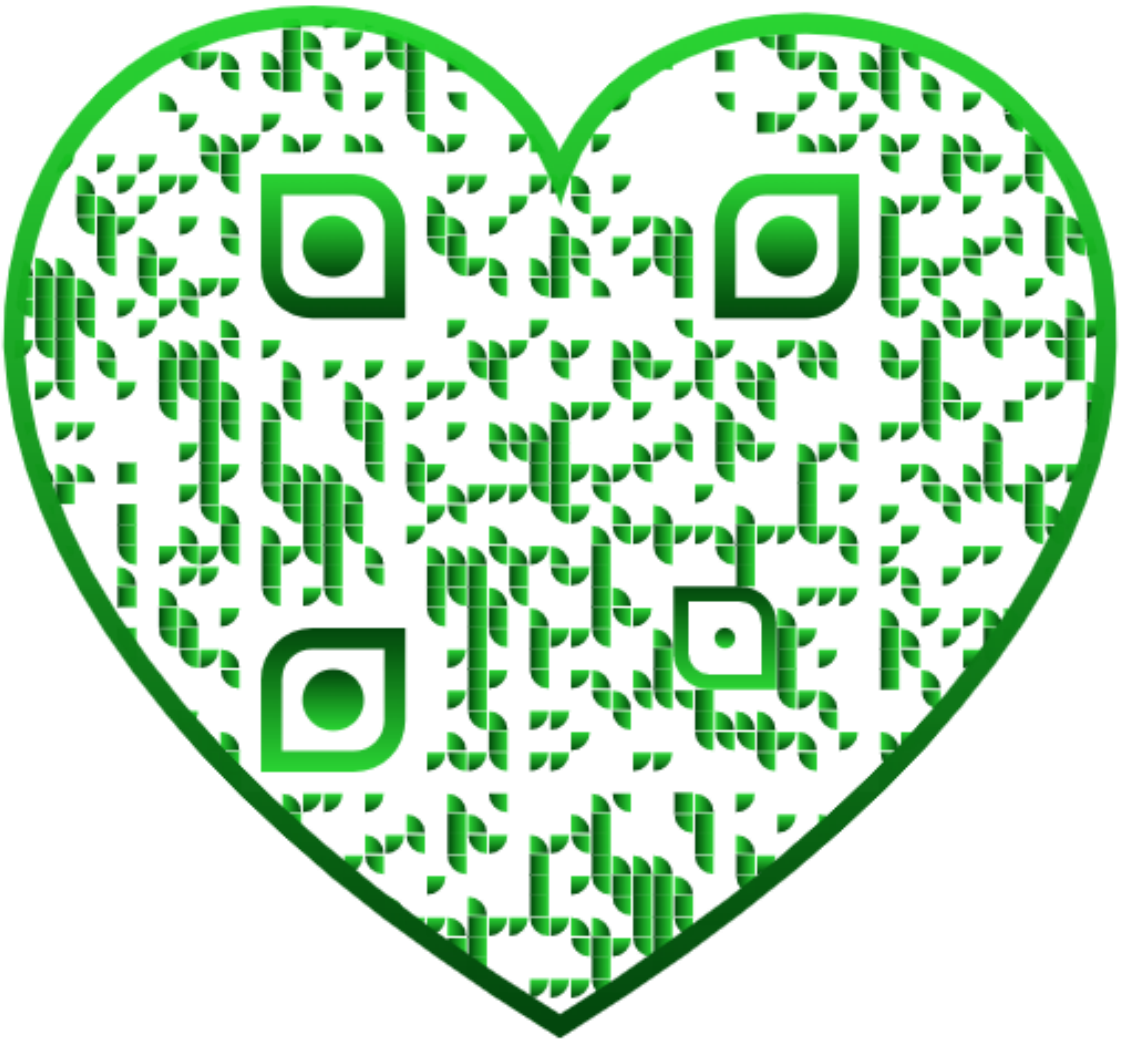

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MOJO '60s
CELEBRATING ROCK'S DECADE OF COOL

The Letter

FROM THE SUMMER OF '66 onwards no one in modern music moved as fast as Jimi Hendrix. With this issue of MOJO '60s we chart his extraordinary ascent, starting right back at New York's Café Wha? with an exclusive conversation with Linda Keith, the lady without whom Jimi's career may well have been so very different. The interview leads us into a forensic account of the 12 months that led to Jimi's arrival on the global stage.

Two months after The Jimi Hendrix Experience unleashed their debut album in May '67, Bobbie Gentry (pictured here) released the classic 7-inch Ode To Billie Joe. The track's Southern Gothic lyricism was a defining moment for a remarkable artist, whose story begins on p.122.

Elsewhere, we hope you enjoy another wild ride through some of the greatest music ever made, featuring everyone from French superstar Serge Gainsbourg through to blues instigator Son House. And rest assured, we'll be back with another instalment very soon...

Phil A.

PHIL ALEXANDER,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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VOODOO CHILE!

Our ace cover image is from Image of an Icon: A Collaborative Exhibition featuring 'Experience Hendrix' and 'Electric Ladyland' by legendary photographer **David Montgomery**, which will run at Proud Chelsea from August 11 to Sept 7. More info at www.proud.co.uk

MOJO '60s
CELEBRATING ROCK'S DECADE OF COOL

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SOUL JAM NEW RELEASES: ACOUSTIC BLUES INSTIGATORS

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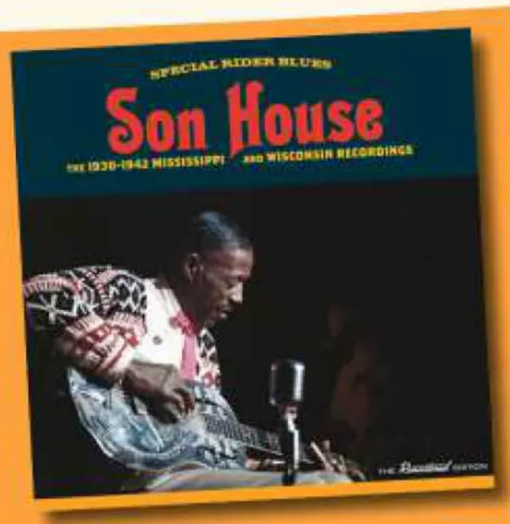


2CD SET

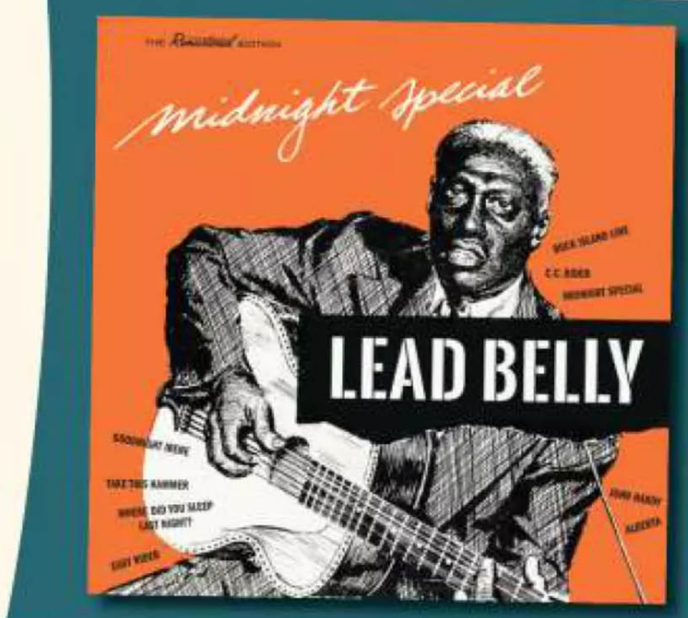
600885
SON HOUSE
SPECIAL RIDER BLUES – THE 1930-1942 MISSISSIPPI AND WISCONSIN RECORDINGS

"Few listening experiencies in the blues are as intense as hearing one of Son House's original 1930s recordings for the Paramount label" – Cub Koda.
"People keep asking me where the blues started and all I can say is that when I was a boy we always was singing in the fields. Not real singing, you know, just hollerin', but we made up our songs about things that was happening to us at the time, and I think that's where the blues started" Son House
CD1- 18 TRACKS – 66:56'
CD2 – 16 TRACKS – 56.17'

2CD SET

600864
ROBERT JOHNSON
GENIUS OF THE BLUES – THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS

"Robert Johnson was like an orchestra all by himself… a brilliant burst of inspiration." Keith Richards.
"I have never found anything more deeply soulful than Robert Johnson. His music remains the most powerful cry that I think you can find in the human voice, really". Eric Clapton.
"The music of Robert Johnson has inspired a million riffs. The myth of Robert Johnson has inspired a million dreams:…". Jimmy Page.
16-PAGE BOOKLET.
CD1 – 22 TRACKS - 61:07'
CD2 – 20 TRACKS - 50.05'



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600886
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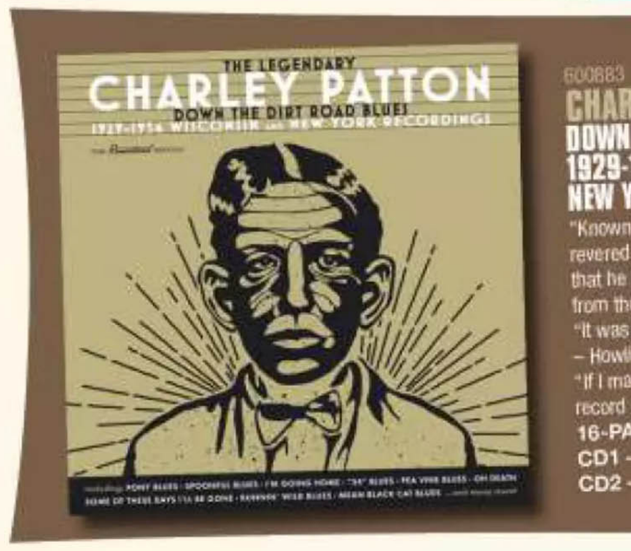
"Lead Belly was not an influence, he was THE influence. If it wasn't for him, I may never have been here". Van Morrison.
"Lead Belly is the hard name of a harder man". Woody Guthrie.
"His image and marketing, often emphasizing his criminal past, provided a blueprint for the presentation of hip-hop and rock artists decades later". New York Times.
"The blues is like this. You lay down some night and you turn from one side of the bed to the other: all night long. It's not too cold in that bed, and it ain't too hot. But what's the matter? The blues has got you". Lead Belly
16-PAGE BOOKLET.
CD1 – 25 TRACKS – 77:10'
CD2 – 25 TRACKS – 68:56'



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CHARLEY PATTON 2CD SET
DOWN THE DIRT ROAD BLUES 1929-1934 WISCONSIN AND NEW YORK RECORDINGS

"Known as the Father of the Delta Blues, Patton was revered by Howlin' Wolf, who once told interviewers that he hung around Patton as a kid and learned guitar from the bluesman". Goldmine magazine.
"It was Patton's music what started me off playing." – Howlin' Wolf.
"If I made records for my own pleasure, I would only record Charley Patton songs". Bob Dylan.
16-PAGE BOOKLET.
CD1 – 25 TRACKS – 78:24'
CD2 – 25 TRACKS – 75:22'

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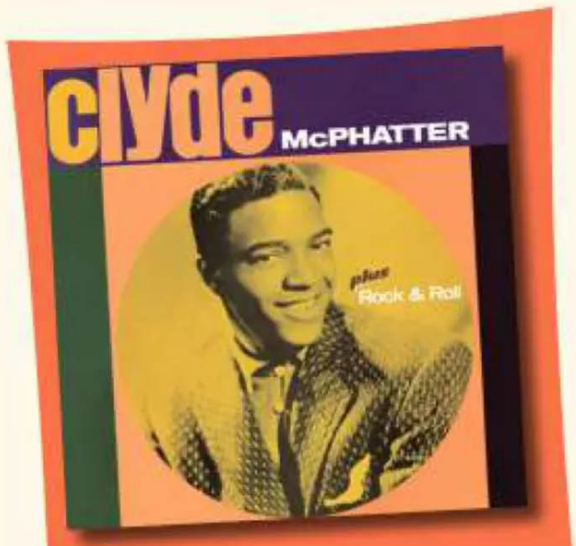
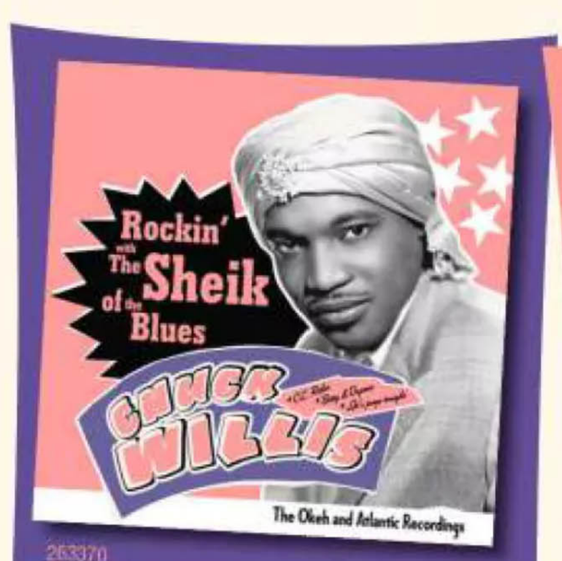


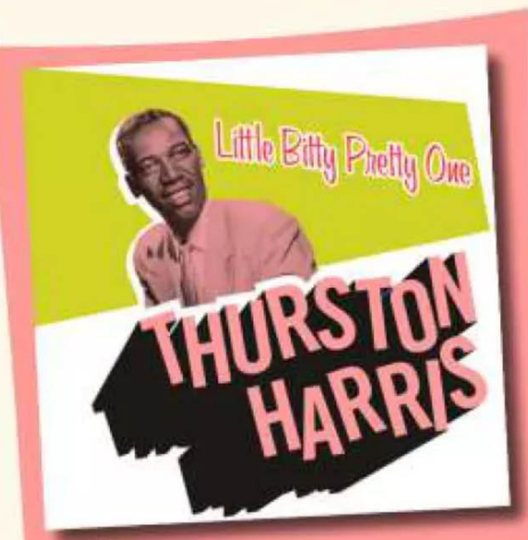
263368
CLYDE McPHATTER
CLYDE + ROCK AND ROLL (1953-1959)

"He was one of the first guys I ever listened to. When he first came on the scene [with Billy Ward and the Dominoes], he was The Man" (Smokey Robinson, 1972)
16-PAGE BOOKLET
31 TRACKS. TOTAL TIME: 79:11



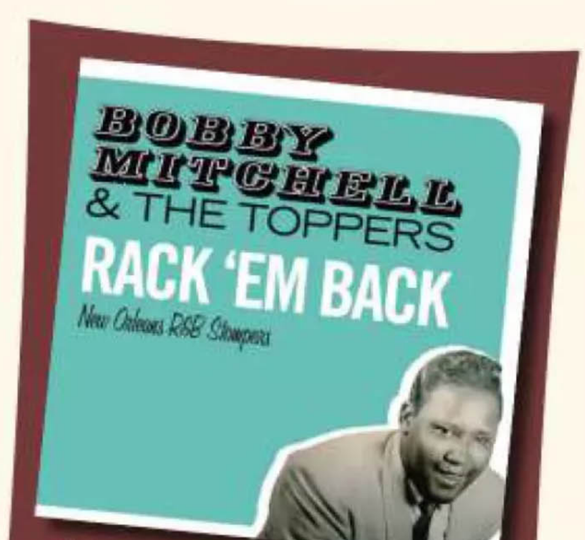
263370
CHUCK WILLIS
ROCKIN'WITH THE SHEIK OF THE BLUES (1951-1958)

"Graceful songs" Greil Marcus
"One day, around 1958, I remember hearing something that was unlike anything I'd ever heard before…The music was demanding, "Listen to me!"… The song was called "See See Rider". Martin Scorsese. 16-PAGE BOOKLET
29 TRACKS. TOTAL TIME: 71:07



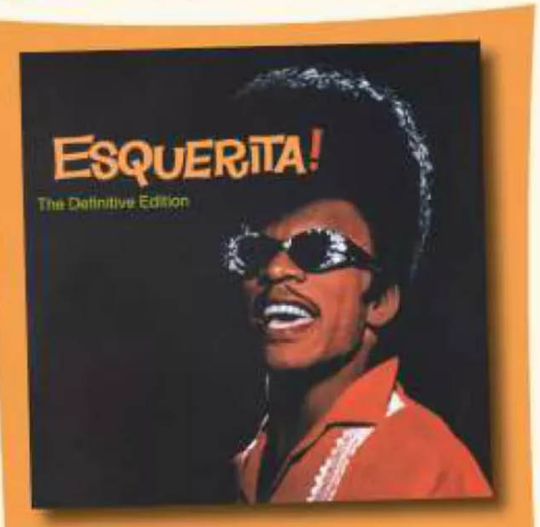
263372
THURSTON HARRIS
LITTLE BITTY PRETTY ONE (1957-1959)

Harris is unquestionably one of the greatest and most underrated black rock and roll singers of the 50s. "Little Bitty Pretty One" is one of the most memorable and recycled rock & roll oldies of all time.
16-PAGE BOOKLET
25 TRACKS. TOTAL TIME: 54:21



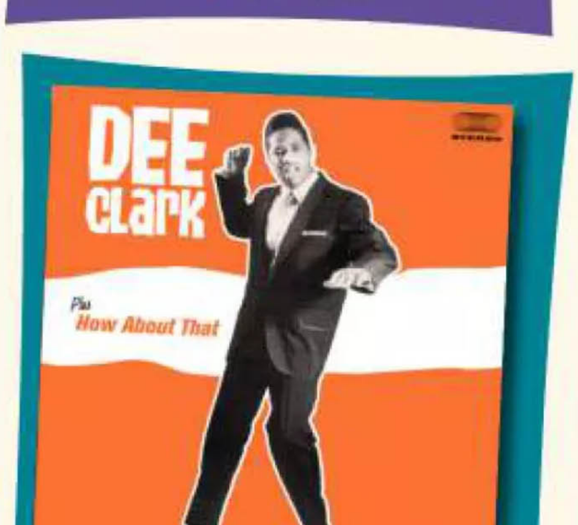
263373
BOBBY MITCHELL
RACK 'EM BACK (1953-1958)

"Bobby Mitchell & The Toppers was probably the first New Orleans doo-wop group to record, thus making Mitchell a true pioneer." From the liner notes.
"'I'm Crying' was my favorite tune." Bobby Mitchell, 1983
16-PAGE BOOKLET
26 TRACKS. TOTAL TIME: 60:26



263375
CESQUERITA
ESQUERITA! THE DEFINITIVE EDITION

Includes 8 Bonus Tracks.
"The violence that was normally only a promise (or threat) in rock 'n' roll was realized in Esquerita's sound". Chrtie Gillett, The Sound of the City.
"I learned a whole lot about phrasing from Esquerita. He really taught me a lot". Little Richard.
16-PAGE BOOKLET
20 TRACKS. TOTAL TIME: 46:48



263376
DEE CLARK
ESQUERITA! THE DEFINITIVE EDITION

2 LPs ON 1 CD +4 bonus tracks
"Clark had a wonderfully impassioned tenor voice and enjoyed a spate of rock'n'roll hits". (The Virgin encyclopedia of R&B and Soul)
16-PAGE BOOKLET
28 TRACKS. TOTAL TIME: 74:10

263383
BILLY LEE RILEY
ROCK WITH ME BABY (1956-1960)

"My hero." Bob Dylan
"Billy Riley"s voice at times had a cadence similar to Elvis Presley"s, but early on he sang with more of a growl."- The New York Times
"Artists that didn't have a band would use the Sun house band, which was in essence, Billy Lee Riley's band." Mark Bell, Sun Studio Director.
16-PAGE BOOKLET
26 TRACKS.TOTAL TIME: 58:02

263385
RUTH BROWN
ROCK AND ROLL + MISS RHYTHM (1949-1959)

"I've heard anyone that sounds like Ruth Brown, before or after. She was a combination of sass and innocence, and she was extremely funky." Bonnie Raitt
"Ms. Brown is among the top black pop singers of the 1950s." The Washington Post
16-PAGE BOOKLET
30 TRACKS Total Time: 78:53

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The Big Picture

Kimono over to ours: (main pic) John Lennon and Paul McCartney at The Beatles' suite at the Tokyo Hilton; (below) live at the Budokan.

I'll Follow The Sun

A new photo-book documents The Beatles' June and July '66 visit to Japan via unseen images. Pat Gilbert gets a sneak preview.

Fifty years ago this summer, The Beatles' existence as a touring band came to an abrupt end with a series of short trips to Germany, the Far East and the US. The five dates the group played in Tokyo, Japan, on Thursday, June 30 through to Saturday, July 2 marked their first (and last) visit to the country and were greeted with characteristically euphoric scenes. The shows were also mired in controversy, as the chosen venue – the 10,000-seater Nippon Budokan Hall – was built to honour Japan's war veterans and usually hosted traditional events such as martial arts displays. The Fabs' appearance there sparked protests from outraged conservative groups.

Documenting the drama on-stage and off- was Shimpei Asai, the only Japanese photographer granted official access to The Beatles' touring party. The singular images he captured have never before been seen outside his native country, but this will change in November with the publication of Hello, Goodbye: The Beatles In Tokyo, 1966, a de luxe limited edition book featuring dozens of his photographs of the trip.

They include live shots and also images taken at a press conference at the Tokyo Hilton hotel, as well as in the group's private suite upstairs. There, Asai photographed The Beatles wearing traditional costumes, painting and experimenting with Japanese instruments.

Security around the group was so tight that The Beatles were unable to leave the Hilton between shows, though John Lennon apparently snuck out for a couple of hours under the pretence he was the British photographer Robert Whitaker.

Hello, Goodbye: The Beatles In Tokyo, 1966 by Shimpei Asai is available as a signed limited edition from Genesis Publications at www.hello-goodbye-book.com or telephone +44(0)1483 540 970.

© Shimpei Asai

The real thing: Small Faces, 1966 (from left) Kenney Jones, Ian McLagan, Steve Marriott, Ronnie Lane.

Stage Show

East End Promise

All Or Nothing, a theatre production telling the bittersweet tale of the Small Faces, is returning to the London stage. Pat Gilbert talks to its writer Carol Harrison and star Chris Simmons.

"It's not fluffy, it's warts'n'all," says writer and actor Carol Harrison of All Or Nothing, her play about the rise and demise of '60s Mod icons the Small Faces, as seen from the point-of-view of their raucous frontman Steve Marriott. "That's what makes it work. [Steve's daughter] Mollie said I'd captured her dad just as he was. It's a classic story – poignant, tragic, funny…"

After an acclaimed month-long run at The Vaults Theatre in Waterloo earlier this year, All Or Nothing is currently being toured nationwide, with a return stint at its original home under the London railway station in July and August. The story begins with the teenage Marriott setting fire to his school and ends with his quitting the band on New Year's Eve 1968, with the SF's tribulations with managers Don Arden and Andrew Oldham – plus loads of terrific music, of course – in between.

Best known as a former EastEnders regular, and the 'girl in the record shop' in Quadrophenia, Harrison was drawn to the story by her family's connections to the singer. "Steve knew my cousin, and I met him when I was eight or nine," she explains. "He was an amazing character and I had a crush on him *(laughs)*. I wanted to write about Steve and the excitement of the Mod era, and also to celebrate the language and humour of the East End. To me, the Small Faces are the '60s' unsung heroes."

The 'older' Marriott is played by Chris Simmons, formerly The Bill's DC Mickey Webb, who describes his character as "a maverick, a genius, tricky to work with but a fascinating guy. I didn't know that much about the Small Faces but as soon as I read the script I knew I had to play this bloke."

The original run was attended by '60s celebrities including Small Face Kenney Jones and 'fifth member' PP Arnold, who also appears as a character in the play. One night, there was also a seat reserved for Rod Stewart, though he cancelled at the last minute. Maybe this time round…

All Or Nothing is at the Vaults Theatre, Waterloo until August 27, then on tour nationwide. More info at www.allornothingthemusical.com

A Mod world: (below) the stage version of the Small Faces belt it out; (right) a Cockney knees-up with Chris Simmons' Steve Marriott, far left, and writer Carol Harrison playing mum Kay Marriott, far right.

"I met Steve Marriott when I was eight or nine. I had a crush on him."

Getty

Blonde On Blonde Revisited
THE VINYL EDITION!

Bob Dylan's classic 1966 album covered in full! On double vinyl!

As well as the standard issue of this month's magazine, MOJO's *Blonde On Blonde Revisited* comes in a special deluxe vinyl edition that has been produced to a remarkably high specification.

Only 3500 pressed!

The package includes the following...

BLONDE ON BLONDE REVISITED 2LP SET

A double vinyl album pressed on 'blonde' vinyl. The package comes in a matt finish and is housed in a custom-made plastic wallet.

THE ARTISTS

From Ryley Walker via Jim O'Rourke to Chip Taylor, every participating artist has been hand-picked by MOJO.
See Page 6 for full tracklisting.

THE MILTON GLASER 1966 POSTER

A reproduction of the original poster created by celebrated US artist Milton Glaser of Dylan in '66.

THE BOB DYLAN SIGNATURE COVER

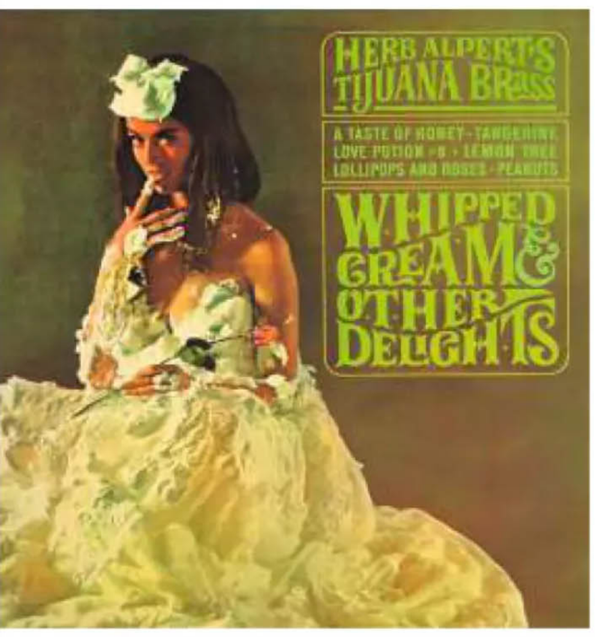
The package comes with an exclusive front page which is devoid of cover lines but features Bob Dylan's signature.

Order your copy of this exclusive package from: www.mojo4music.com

Delightful: Herb Alpert blowing hot and cool.

The Mex Pistol

Tijuana Brass superstar Herb Alpert reveals the origins of his trademark sound as his groovy lost '60s classics are remastered. By Ian Harrison.

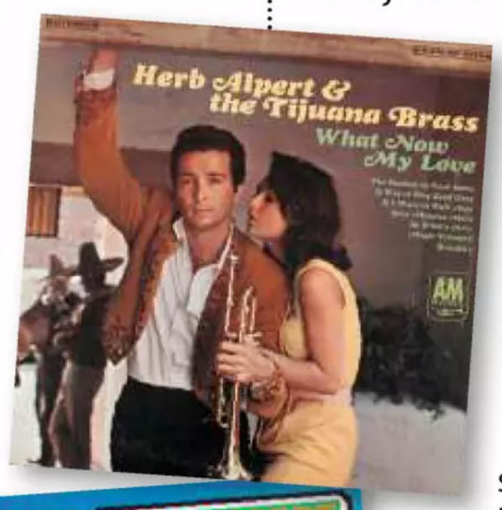


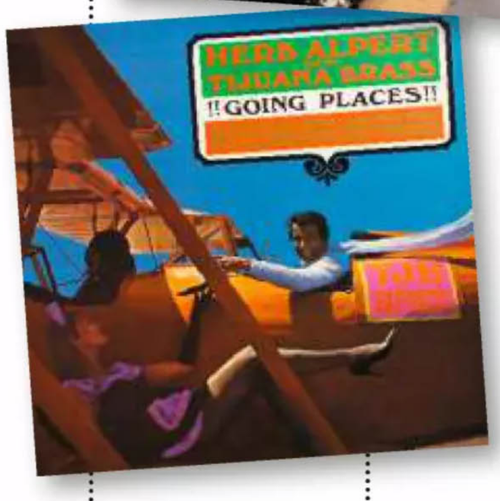
Brass attacks: south of the border-flavoured easy listening genius with the saucy *Whipped Cream…* (above) plus *What Now My Love* and *!!Going Places!!* (right).

Connoisseurs of happening retro LP cover art will know the livery of 1965 multimillion-seller *Whipped Cream & Other Delights* by Herb Alpert's Tijuana Brass – depicting as it does model Dolores Erickson looking charming, slathered in shaving foam. But in truth, this album was just one in a lengthy discography of jazz-pop horn fantasias that sold by the bomber-load throughout the '60s and beyond.

Complementing last year's re-release of *Whipped Cream…*, 24 albums from this catalogue have been remastered from the original analogue tapes by Grammy-winning engineer Bernie Grundman for CD reissue in September. Three '60s gems will also appear on vinyl: *South Of The Border*, *What Now My Love* and *!!Going Places!!*. Therein, hits including The Lonely Bull, A Taste Of Honey and Spanish Flea can be heard in glorious upgraded sound, with Herb's economical trumpet playing an instantly recognisable part of the whole. "The timing was right and we felt like these records didn't have full coverage throughout Europe," says Herb, a spry 81. "I'm excited. I hope someone else is!"

To fathom the origins of the Tijuana Brass sound, he goes on, we must go back to the late '50s, when the budding jazz trumpeter was employed as a staff writer at LA indie Keen Records. It was there that he co-composed Sam Cooke's 1960 hit Wonderful World with fellow music industry heavy-hitter Lou Adler. "I learned a lot from Sam," says Herb. "He'd say, 'Herbie, people are just listening to a cool piece of wax. It either makes it or it don't!' He broke it down to the essentials. What is that thing in a song that gives you goosebumps?"





In 1962 he co-founded A&M Records with his partner Jerry Moss, its first release being The Lonely Bull, inspired in part by a bullfight in the Mexican pleasure zone just across the border with Californian. "Also, I heard a record, How High The Moon, by Les Paul and Mary Ford in 1957," says Herb. "Les was taking his guitar and layering it, and I tried doing that with the trumpet in my little studio at home using two tape machines. I knew the double trumpet sound was good because that sound turned me on. I played all the trumpets on all the Tijuana Brass records, period."

The group's success was further sealed by their 1965 version of A Taste Of Honey, and in 1968 Alpert reached US Number 1 with an atypical vocal performance of Bacharach & David's This Guy's In Love With You. He would, however, suspend operations after experiencing a strange out-of-body experience while on-stage in Munich in November '69.

"I felt like I'd kind of spent my wad on it," he reflects. "I was starting to repeat myself, and I was going through a divorce at that time, too. Emotionally I wasn't in a good place, and the music suffered."

That said, he continued to have hits including Rise in 1979 – sampled by Biggie Smalls in 1997 – and Diamonds in 1987. Today, he paints and sculpts, and continues to gig and record with his wife, the jazz singer Lani Hall. Presented with the National Medal of Arts by President Obama in 2013, the multiple Grammy winner is also a philanthropist, via his charitable foundation. But our conversation proves he's still a boho cat at heart, happy with a legacy that inevitably returns to the sleeve of *Whipped Cream…*

"I've had so many comments about that," he says. "One time this guy comes up to me and he said, I love that picture. I said, Thank you so much. How about the album itself? He said, 'Well I haven't had a chance to listen to it yet.' It was like, Screw the album, I like that girl! Jeez!"

"I knew the double trumpet sound was good because that sound turned me on."

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What GOES ON!

Simon Napier-Bell

He rescued Burt Bacharach's first film soundtrack, introduced Jimmy Page to The Yardbirds, discovered Marc Bolan then vanished with his swag to Spain. Pat Gilbert takes lunch with a '60s legend.

What was it, in retrospect, that made the '60s swing?

The first thing, after the end of National Service, was the Pill. What had stopped boys and girls having sex was not their morality, but a fear of pregnancy. Suddenly all that sexual repression went, which was great if you were gay because the boys who were getting it weren't as hung up and aggressive towards you anymore. The second was the beginning of the breakdown of class with Coronation Street, which prepared us for the northern lilt of The Beatles. By 1964, everyone, depending on age, wanted to be either a pop star like The Beatles or a manager like Brian Epstein.

You started out working as a music editor in film – how did you make the transition into management?

I was editing the music for [1965 film comedy] What's New Pussycat? and Burt Bacharach had been commissioned to do the score. But even though he'd had several Number 1s, he'd never done a film score before. We needed 51 pieces of music; he wrote 51 tunes, every one of them superbly scored. The man was a genius, but they were just bits and pieces of music. The producer and film director sat in despair. Being the cheeky little cunt that I was, I said, "I'll turn them into a score." I made a bed in the cutting room and stayed day and night for six weeks and I massacred his music, the poor man, but that's the arrogance of youth.

At the premiere in New York, Burt stormed out after 10 minutes. The next day, the New York Times said, "In Burt Bacharach, we have found a new master of the film score!" They paid me £10,000 for my work. I was just 21 years old – and, of course, of all the things I could have bought I spent the money on an imported pale-blue Ford Thunderbird. The connections I made meant I began working with musicians.

Your first success as a manager came with the duo Diane Ferraz and Nicky Scott. Was it easy to launch pop acts ?

I knew them both from the scene, from staying out late and drinking. I put them together and wrote them a song which was a rip off of Get Off Of My Cloud. We recorded it, then I took it to the pirate station, Radio London. In those days, they had a publishing company and you'd give them the B-side publishing in return for so many plays. The next Sunday I put on the Top 40. I thought I'd been ripped off, but then there it was at Number 3. I couldn't believe it and became hooked on being a pop manager.

You got Jimmy Page into The Yardbirds. How were you aware of him?

I'd written the words to Dusty Springfield's You Don't Have To Say You Love Me and had a songwriting contract with United Artists. When I made my demos for them, I always got in a young session musician – Jimmy Page. When Paul Samwell Smith left, I got the idea for Jimmy to replace him, even though he played guitar and Paul played bass. Halfway through the first song of the first gig, Jimmy gave the bass to Chris Dreja and took his guitar. From then on, neither of them were happy; Jeff because he was sharing his solos with Jimmy, and Jimmy because he was having to play Jeff's solos.

Simon Napier-Bell (left, in the 1960s)and today (above): "Burt Bacharach stormed out of the New York premiere when he heard what I'd done."

You also 'discovered' Bolan. What did you think was special about him?

Marc Bolan turned up on my doorstep in Victoria with his guitar slung on his back, saying he had a tape of his songs. It was seven in the evening. I was pissed off he'd turned up at my home but I invited him in. Then he said he didn't actually have a tape *(laughs)*. I said, play your songs then. He climbed onto this big chair I had, sat cross-legged, started singing and playing. It was mesmerising, by 9pm I was booking a studio. That session was eventually released on Track as *Beginning Of Doves*.

But people didn't get him at first. Why?

When we made Hippy Gumbo, his first single, I went round all the labels, and they all turned it down. Marc was waiting for me at my flat and when I told him they'd all wanted him to compromise, he went deathly white. He went to the toilet, I heard him vomit, then came back and said he wasn't going to change a thing and they were a bunch of cunts. Which I admired.

You then got Bolan into John's Children – which was an interesting move…

He stayed with them for seven or eight months but it didn't work for him. He wanted his own band. We did a couple of tours with The Who, one in Germany ended in disaster – we were thrown out of Nuremberg, beaten up by security guards. We drove back over the mountains, stopped off in Luxembourg, and I took the group to see a Ravi Shankar concert. Marc was entranced by him, how he was sitting on a rug, with the bongos. Not long after that he bought a rug, got a bongo player and played like Ravi in Tyrannosaurus Rex.

You became a producer, working with bands like The Scaffold and Peter Sarstedt. Then, in 1969, you disappeared until you hit big again with Japan and Wham! in the early '80s. What happened?

I always said I was going to retire when I was 30, which I turned in 1969. So even though I didn't want to, I moved to a big villa in Spain, but after a week I hated it so much I ended up going round the world for two years producing records from Brazil to Italy to Spain. I had hits too. I came back to Britain when the tax situation was better and the money had run out.

"Marc went white and then vomited. But he wouldn't change."

Getty

Where Were You When...

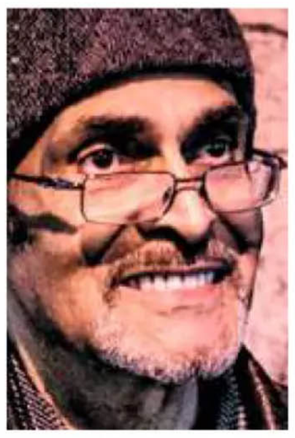
Riots On Sunset Strip

In the mid-'60s, Love, The Byrds and The Doors were creating a scene in LA that celebrated the decade's new vibrations of optimism and fun. But the cops had other ideas. Love's Johnny Echols recalls how things turned nasty with the LAPD.

Date: November 12, 1966

Event: For two years, the clubs on Sunset Strip had become a magnet for young people wanting to experience the exhilarating atmosphere of a new, modern, multi-racial America. But then the police incited a riot as a means to crack down on the emerging counterculture.

Eyewitness: Love's Johnny Echols



Johnny Echols: "The kids were going out to have fun, not bring down the establishment."

"Sunset Strip had become the creative hub of the counterculture – it was where the freaks congregated. The authorities saw it as a serious threat to mainstream society and it really felt like they were going after us – Love, The Doors. They wanted to get rid of Love because we were different, were interracial at a time of racial tension. The cops would come on stage while we were playing and drag Arthur [Lee] off to the station. Jim [Morrison] was outrageous, pushing the boundaries of so-called decency, so they did the same with him. When the cops had to let them go and they couldn't stop us, they went after us through the kids. If they removed our audience, they removed our reason for being. So in came the curfew, the demo and then the riot.

It really all began when The Byrds played at Ciro's in March '65. We'd heard their songs and were really intrigued, so Arthur and I went to see them. Bob Dylan joined them on-stage, Taj Mahal was there too. It really felt like there was something in the air. We started doing Byrds songs in our repertoire, our first album [1966's *Love*] was really influenced by them. By this time me and David Crosby were good friends, and he said, 'There's already a Byrds, so maybe you need to develop your own sound.' Which is what we did with [1966's] *Da Capo*.

We were playing the Whisky A Go-Go and there were always queues around the block. It was standing room only and there was a real camaraderie between the bands – The Byrds influenced us, Love influenced The Doors, it was a proper community.

The mood started changing slowly. On weekends kids would caravan up and down the strip, then they started doing it through the week and started sleeping in doorways. The shops felt it was bad for business, they got upset, they wanted something done about them, so they called the cops. At first they brought in loitering laws and the curfew – no kids out after 10pm. It didn't change much as most of the kids disregarded it. The cops knew them, knew they were good kids, basically, just out for a good time, so they turned a blind eye. But every now and then the LAPD would come to make an arrest – because they could.

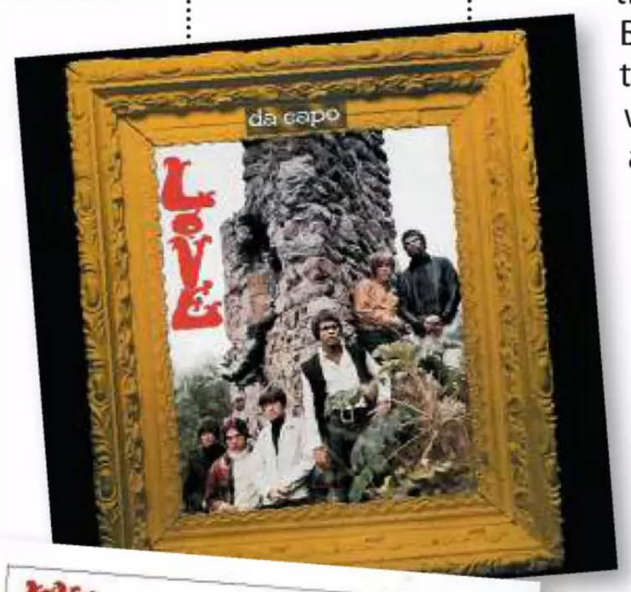
Then came the crackdown on Pandora's Box [club on Sunset Boulevard and Crescent Heights]. The kids felt that was an invasion of their civil liberties, so on November 12, 1966 they staged a demo. It came to a head at the club – the police came with their paddy wagons and started the riot. The kids didn't want violence, they just wanted to experience life for the first time without their parents. They were going out to have fun, not bring down the establishment.

The whole tenor of the Strip changed after that. A lot of people from San Francisco came down, bringing hard drugs, heroin and meth, which wasn't around before – there was just hash and LSD. Then the Hells Angels came and the Manson family. By '67, the scene had gone. We'd got big by that time, so it didn't affect us personally – we were spending a lot of time in studios and on the road. We'd come through and play the Whisky or the Trip, but we didn't hang out. The caravans and cars had gone, and now there was a darkness.

That darkness was indicative of the times and it fed into *Forever Changes*. That album was our newsreel, memorialising the times we lived in. We were exploring the underbelly of society – war, hatred – but we also promised the possibility of redemption, of having a confidence to start again, to tap into the same feelings that had created the Strip when it was great."

As told to Lois Wilson

Johnny fronts Love Revisited, celebrating the music of Arthur Lee and Love. More info at love-revisted.com.



The kids are all riot: young groovers climb on a bus to express their dissatisfaction.

"The whole tenor of the Strip changed. Heroin arrived, and with it darkness."

PA, Rex

The beat goes off: Sonny and Cher, who played on Sunset Strip early in their career as Caesar and Cleo, show their support.

NOW

What GOES ON!

Dion DiMucci: dreaming of the day he'll cover Jimi's Purple Haze.

The Coral

Real-life orgies, UFO abductees, late-night meetings in hotels with a lonely Dion DiMucci, Florida psychedelia played on an 'octachord', Hells Angels' laments – all this and more tingles the '60s nerve-endings of the Merseyside melody makers.

COMMON PEOPLE
Those Who Love

(On Of The People/By The People/For The People, *Capitol, 1969)*

James Skelly (vocals): "We were making [2005's] *The Invisible Invasion* and [producer] Geoff Barrow put this on really loud through the studio speakers and as soon as the string intro came in I was hooked. It's evocative, stirring, and then the vocal comes in and it sounds like a Hells Angel's lament. It's arranged by David Axelrod."

DION DIMUCCI
No One's Waiting For Me

(Single, Columbia, 1963)

James Skelly: "Ian [Skelly] and I went to watch Dion in London and we were so obsessed with him we found out where he was staying. He was at a table in the bar on his own so we ended up sitting with him for an hour. I asked him about this song and why it was so haunted and dark, and he said that he was staying in a hotel with his wife and a young girl had committed suicide in the room next door. He saw the body and went back into his room and wrote this with his wife."

JIM SULLIVAN
UFO

(On UFO, *Monnie, 1969)*

Ian Skelly (drums): "I was attracted by the myth surrounding Jim Sullivan – how he wrote songs about UFOs then disappeared in New Mexico in 1974, some saying he was abducted by aliens. He made a cameo in Easy Rider, and his only record was this private pressing from 1969. I was blown away by his voice, also the arrangement, by Jimmy Bond, one of the Wrecking Crew. It's an amazing record – psych, folk, rock, with no boundaries."

ARZACHEL
Queen Street Gang Theme

(On Arzachel, *Evolution, 1969)*

Ian Skelly: "It's one of the band's favourite instrumentals. It's actually a cover of Funky Fanfare by the producer and composer Keith Mansfield, and the sound is great from top to bottom, from the tape hiss to the organ reverb, from the low end distortion to the heavy slow drum groove by Clive Brooks. Arzachel were actually Uriel, the Brit psych group featuring Steve Hillage."

THE COUNT FIVE
Psychotic Reaction

(Single, Double Shot, 1966)

Paul Duffy (bass): "The band were from San Jose, were obviously inspired by the British blues/psych movement, especially The Yardbirds and their rave-ups, but also their US contemporaries like The Standells. Psychotic Reaction was a big hit in the US, a perfect example of being able to be garage but also commercial. I just love the riff and the double-time progression in the middle."

Good reef: James Skelly (above), as with his band mates "obsessed with Dion".

"White Noise's My Game Of Loving is dark magic and Dr Who combined."

DION DIMUCCI
Purple Haze

(On Dion, *London, 1968)*

Paul Duffy: "This was a great inspiration when we were recording [2007's] *Roots & Echoes*. I remember us all listening to this just thinking Dion was strictly doo wop and being really surprised to hear his rendition of a Hendrix classic. Of course, this being Dion, he stamps his own imprint on it completely – it's acoustic, with soaring piccolo and strings."

THE HONDAS
12 Feet High

(Single, Eden, 1962)

Paul Molloy (guitars): "This was one of six 45s produced by Lee Hazlewood and arranged by Jack Nitzsche for the very short lived Eden label. Hazlewood wrote this one, too, and I discovered it on *Califia: The Songs Of Lee Hazlewood*, which is a part of Ace Records' Songwriter Series. Jack Nitzsche's string arrangement is really expressive and the vocal harmonies are brilliant, almost early Tamla pop-soul style."

THE PRETTY THINGS
The Sun

(On Emotions, *Fontana, 1967)*

Paul Molloy: "I've always loved *S.F. Sorrow* and then Ian [Skelly] put me on to this tune and it's such a beautiful song with such a haunting melody. It's written by their lead singer Phil May, guitarist Dick Taylor and bassist Wally Waller, and is beautifully orchestrated by Reg Tilsley. It's nothing like their early R&B recordings."

WE THE PEOPLE
In The Past

(Single, Challenge, 1966)

Nick Power (keys): "It's really strange Florida-based '60s psych. It sounds like The Byrds if they'd been recorded in Turkey or somewhere in the Middle East. Mainly because of the use of the 'octachord', an eight-stringed instrument, which was played by the group's lead guitarist Wayne Proctor, who also wrote the song. It was later covered by the Chocolate Watchband."

WHITE NOISE
My Game Of Loving

(On An Electric Storm, *Island, 1969)*

Nick Power: "White Noise were David Vorhaus, Delia Derbyshire and Brian Hodgson, who teamed up after Vorhaus attended one of Derbyshire and Hodgson's lectures on electronic music and was inspired to make his own. This track, sung by Annie Bird, sees them record an occult love song, with sounds of a real and electronic orgy merged together. It's dark magic and Dr Who combined."

As told to Lois Wilson

The Coral curate the first Skeleton Coast festival, on August 6 at Hoylake Promenade.

Courtesy of RA Andreas/Bear Family

The Story Behind The Song

You Don't Miss Your Water

In 1961, singer William Bell was stuck in rainy New York feeling homesick for Memphis. Suddenly, out poured the words to a song that would make him a star, gift Stax with its first Billboard 100 hit and all but invent country soul.

LABEL
Stax
RELEASED
November 1961
CHART PEAK
US 95
COMPOSER
William Bell
PRODUCER
Chips Moman
RECORDED
Stax Studios

"You Don't Miss Your Water was the song that took off for me. When I wrote it, I never thought it would be a hit, but the DJs picked up on it pretty quick and it struck a chord with radio audiences. I definitely never thought of it as revolutionary, but people now herald it as the beginning of country soul or Southern soul.

The record was my first single for Stax, which was already a label you aspired to be signed to, but there was no pressure on me – the writing came easy and the recording session was relaxed. It helped that I already knew the studio and its staff as I'd sung back-up on demos for other Stax artists the previous year. This was with The Del Rios, a four-piece vocal group, made up of me and my neighbourhood friends Harrison Austin, Louis Williams and David Brown.

We'd got the job through Rufus Thomas. He was a DJ in Memphis at the time, and also had a vaudeville act, Rufus And Bones, who performed at the Palace Theatre, just around the corner from the Flamingo Room where The Del Rios sung doo wop and R&B on a Friday and Saturday night. He dropped by in his breaks and saw us sing, liked us, and asked if we would perform behind his daughter Carla Thomas on [her 1961 ballad] Gee Whiz.

Chips Moman was producing Carla and was running the production department at Stax, auditioning new singers and recording demos. He liked The Del Rios, and offered us a deal. Unfortunately, David Brown and Harrison Austin were older than Louis and me and they were drafted; then Louis went off to be the lead singer in The Ovations, so that just left me.

I wasn't interested in being a solo singer – in fact, I was set on being a doctor and was planning on going off to study the following year. I needed money to pay for medical school and when that summer I got offered a six-week gig – which turned into a three-month stint – with the Phineas Newborn Orchestra to play New York, I forgot about Chips Moman's offer and took the shows.

When we got three or four weeks into the tour, I was dreadfully homesick, missing my friends, family, Memphis. We had a day off and it was raining and I was in my hotel room, feeling sorry for myself, and started equating my situation to losing a lover. Lyrics started to come into my head – "But when you left me/And said bye-bye/I missed my water/My well ran dry". I got the words down on paper, a melody came with them, but I had to remember that until we went back to work a couple of days later, where I sat at the piano and charted out the chords.

When we got back to Memphis after the tour, I went straight to Chips Moman, told him I had a song and played it to him on the piano. He picked up the guitar, charted out the chords for a demo for [Stax co-founder] Jim Stewart, and got in Rufus's son Marvell Thomas to play piano. Lewie Steinberg played bass and Howard Grimes *[or possibly Ron Capone]* played drums. Chips played the guitar parts and I sung.

I recommended Booker T. Jones to play organ on it, as he played the organ in my church, and once we had the feeling of the song right we did two or three takes maximum. Chips added some horns, but kept the production sparse.

Once it was mixed, he played it to Jim Stewart, who said it sounded too much like a gospel song. He wanted something more uptempo, like the songs he'd been putting out and doing well on, and hallelujah for [Stewart's sister and Stax co-founder] Miss Estelle Axton as she said, 'No this is a hit, you got to release this', and she and Chips finally convinced Jim to put it out.

Estelle Axton was right as well, as it was an immediate hit in Memphis. But because it was issued in November, it got lost in the run-up to Christmas and only started to catch on further afield in the new year, when it hit Number 1 in New Orleans, then Baton Rouge, then Pensacola, and then the calls started coming in fast from all over the country and it really took off.

I was promoting it live at the same time, but no one believed I was the singer of the song until I actually opened my mouth, because they assumed it was sung by an older man. But the response to it was tremendous: in some ways the surprise element worked in my favour and I couldn't believe how I'd turn up to these strange cities and everyone would be calling out for the song and knew all the words and would be singing along to it.

By April 1962 it was in the Billboard Hot 100, only at Number 95, but that was a big deal for me and Stax and it sold around 200,000 copies.

As for its legacy, it started my career, gave me my first hit, and introduced me as a singer and songwriter. It also put Stax on the radar as it gave them their first Billboard hit and it became known as 'the Stax sound' for a while.

I still play the song now, I have to at every show, there'd probably be a riot if I didn't. But it's also touched other singers, too. I'm amazed by the amount of people who have covered it: Otis Redding, of course, The Byrds did it on their *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* album, Taj Mahal did it, Peter Tosh. I don't have a favourite version, I'm just touched that so many people can identify with it. I guess it's the honesty and the truthfulness expressed in it."

As told to Lois Wilson

"No one believed I was the singer – they assumed it was an older man."

Alamy

William Bell's new album, This Is Where I Live, *is out now on Stax.*

What GOES ON!

Bell de jour: "I wasn't interested in being a solo singer, I was set on being a doctor."

What GOES ON!

Get off of my bench: the Stones by the sea, June 1, 1964.

Alamy

Not Fade Away

The Rolling Stones' first Top 10 hit revived a Buddy Holly B-side that paid homage to the rhythmic signature of an R&B great. Paul Trynka digs back to uncover the story of the 'Bo Diddley' beat and its importance to the British Invasion.

COMPOSER
Buddy Holly and Norman Petty
COVERED BY
The Rolling Stones, in February 1964, for their third UK A-side

Bo Diddley, the mastermind behind the "shave and a haircut – two bits" rhythm that carries his name, was an entertaining but irascible figure. He described the making of his breakthrough hit with a mix of ebullience and evasiveness: "I get upset talking about that," he told me. "That beat we are talking about, I only used that on the one song, on Bo Diddley. So that ain't the Bo Diddley beat."

Ellas McDaniel, as he was then, hung out on the Chicago streets with a loose gang of musicians. The little group approached Chess Records, and for their recording debut worked up a cover of Red Saunders' Hambone, modified with a string of obscene lyrics. Phil and Leonard Chess sent McDaniel home to come up with a bowdlerised version – and then named their artist after the new song's chorus: "So that was a good idea of Leonard's," said Bo of his new moniker. "Wasn't much else that he did."

Bo's song lifted the rhythm of Hambone pretty much whole and then stripped it down, with his tremolo'd guitar emphasising the five key beats. Whether he liked it or not (he was ambivalent, for he also once told me "it's a shame you can't copyright a beat"), the rhythm would become synonymous with him, and a cornerstone of rock and blues for ever.

Bo's song soon caught the ear of fast-moving Lubbock musician Buddy Holly, who would make that beat a staple of many of his tracks as well as recording his own cover version. Holly had already racked up a string of hits when he recorded Not Fade Away in May 1957. According to Don Everly, the song was destined for the Everly Brothers "because the rhythm was what we were into – the Bo Diddley thing. But we told him it was more suitable for him!"

Buddy took the basic rhythm, and the call-and-response structure of Bo Diddley's single, and transformed it with a trademark economy. Vocal 'bops' provided the central thread, while Crickets drummer Jerry Allison pounds out the beat on a cardboard box. Most strikingly, while Buddy sings the main verse, guitars and bass cut out completely, a pioneering example of the kind of minimalism employed by Prince a full three decades later. Released as the B-Side of Oh Boy that October, the song would be covered many times in subsequent years – although undoubtedly the most famous was sung by a Dartford youth who ventured out with his friend Dick Taylor to London's Woolwich Granada cinema on March 14, 1958 (there are conflicting reports, but it's likely Buddy performed the song that evening).

The Rolling Stones had released one underwhelming single, Come On, in September 1963, followed by a bona fide hit, I Wanna Be Your Man, gifted by their friends and rivals The Beatles. The third single, manager Andrew Loog Oldham later explained, was his vision; he'd heard Keith Richards strumming the song at their shared flat on Mapesbury Road.

The session at Regent Sound was faltering when guests Gene Pitney and Phil Spector uncorked a bottle of Courvoisier. Spector was either playing maracas or, more likely, tapping on the brandy bottle, as the definitive take was captured. Honed by their incessant live shows, the band restored all the lasciviousness of Bo's early songs (several of which were regular in their set).

Pop-eyed and aggressive, the song rocked along, aided by Regent Sound's boxy, compressed ambience, and the cranked-up harmonica of Brian Jones, which played ping-pong with Jagger's sneered vocal lines. The version was nasty, brutish and short, fading away before two minutes was up. It would become the band's biggest hit to date, hitting Number 3 in the UK charts in March '64, and marking their debut in the US charts.

Not Fade Away would be the key song of the band's first US tour that June, keeping up that vital momentum until DJ Murray The K suggested they cover It's All Over Now. The band continued to play the song live, notably during the mid-'90s Voodoo Lounge tour. By that time, in one of life's nice little ironies, it made a tidy little packet for Paul McCartney – who had acquired the rights to Buddy Holly's publishing catalogue in 1976.

"Bo's song lifted the rhythm of Hambone pretty much whole."

"Say Cheese!": Ronnie 'Mouse' Weiss (centre) and The Traps.

Nuggets Unearthed

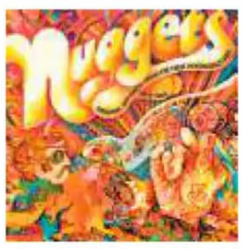
Mouse And The Traps

The mysterious 'Mouse' lived in Tyler, East Texas and had little time for The Beatles. But, boy, could he do a convincing Bob Dylan impression. Mark Paytress investigates the source of the rollicking *Nuggets* Bob-alike, A Public Execution.

One day, early in 1966, a promotions man working for Columbia Records was surprised to hear the latest Bob Dylan 45 on KLIF Radio, a huge network operating out of Dallas, Texas. He called up the DJ demanding to know how he'd got his hands on the record and why he'd taken it upon himself to give Bob Dylan a new name – Mouse.

That song was A Public Execution. And it certainly did sound like definitive Dylan: far more Positively 4th Street than Bob's latest, idiosyncratic hit, Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window? But the singer was indeed Mouse, alias Ronnie Weiss from Tyler, East Texas. Passionate about the guitar since his teenage days in the mid-'50s, and especially passionate about R&B, Weiss had recorded sessions at producer Robin Hood Brians' local studio and worked the local circuit with groups like The Catalinas. He was versatile too. "When you played East Texas, you quickly learn to be a human jukebox," says Brians.

Though the short but clearly capable Mouse (originally Mighty Mouse) had little time for The Beatles, Dylan's electrifying, late summer '65 LP, *Highway 61 Revisited*, turned his head. "Highway 61 was one of the first songs I ever worked up by him," he says today, "that and Tombstone Blues and From A Buick 6. I had a lot of respect for him," he says. "Such a good lyricist."



24-carat gold: the original *Nuggets* compilation.

SONG
A Public Execution
LABEL
Fraternity
RELEASED
Feb 1966
CHART PEAK
US 121
COMPOSERS
Ronnie Weiss & Knox Henderson
PRODUCER
Robin Hood Brians

"In East Texas you quickly learned to be a human jukebox."

But it was a 'Dear John' letter, not Dylan, that unexpectedly unlocked Mouse's inner poet. "My girlfriend had heard I'd been running round with some good-looking girl and she sent the rings back without giving me a chance to explain that the girl was a distant cousin of mine. It pissed me off badly, so I said to my friend Knox [Henderson], We gotta write a song, man."

"When Mouse and Knox played it for me, it just blew me away," says Robin Hood Brians. "Knox was a big fan of Dylan, and Mouse just happened to sound like Dylan. Everything else just came naturally."

Hauling in local players, bassist Dave Stanley, lead guitarist Buddy 'Bugs' Henderson, drummer Don 'Levi' Garrett, Randy Fouts on piano, and installing himself on Farfisa, the producer put the makeshift combo through three long sessions before emerging with the definitive take. "We looked at each other and smiled," he says. "It had that magic about it."

With the support of Weiss's music industry pal, Fraternity Records boss Harry Carlson, and one-time Tyler DJ Jimmy Rabbitt, who plugged it on KLIF, A Public Execution swept through the American South, eventually hitting 121 on the Billboard chart. Mouse And The Traps went out as a bona fide group, supporting The Mamas And The Papas and The Byrds, and followed up their hit with the electrifying, largely Dylan-free Maid Of Sugar, Maid Of Spice, and a further run of impressive pop-psych 45s. But by the time *Nuggets* gave A Public Execution a second hearing in 1972, they were gone.

Today, Mouse is still in Tyler, still playing A Public Execution and other vintage Mouse material. He also performs a handful of Dylan covers. "I'm considering getting Mouse and the boys in to record them on an album," says Robin Hood Brians. "He does 'em better than Dylan."

‘Would I have made it without the MU? Probably. If I was starting out again, would I still join? Definitely.’

—

‘The MU has been around even longer than me. Helping musicians of all ages and genres. Let’s make sure they continue to do so.

—

Jimmy Page

Join us now.

theMU.org

Membership is open to **all** musicians.

Musicians’ Union

THE BEAUTI

Baron Wolman took some of the greatest photographs of the '60s. A new exhibition

© Baron Wolman

On The Road Again

A young couple provide their own soundtrack during a 10-mile-long traffic jam into the Woodstock festival.

WHEN THEY BILLED IT AS "Three Days Of Peace And Music", the organisers expected to attract no more than 50,000 people. Instead, Woodstock Music And Art Fair was packed with more than half a million hippies and freaks between August 15 and 17, 1969, and became the great, archetypal music festival. More than that, though, Woodstock was a pivotal moment in the history of the counter-culture. It was the point where America's underground went overground and caught the attention of the wider world.

Rolling Stone photographer Baron Wolman made the trip to the festival site at Max Yasgur's farm in Bethel, upstate New York; he captured some of the most iconic images of the event – and of the 1960s as a revolutionary decade. That landmark period in our musical and cultural history is now being celebrated by a new exhibition, Woodstock By Baron Wolman, at London's Proud Gallery.

Up on-stage Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Sly And The Family Stone, Crosby, Stills, Nash And Young, Santana and the Grateful Dead were among the 32 acts providing the soundtrack to the festival. But there were more than 500,000 other stories taking place off the stage.

"I spent most of my time out in the wild with the crowd, because what was happening out there was just too interesting not to explore," says Baron Wolman now.

Wolman's photographs captured every facet of the Woodstock Festival. Forty-seven years later, each one of these remarkable pictures has a tale to tell.

Woodstock By Baron Wolman runs through August until September 11, 2016 at London's Proud Gallery. For more info go to www.proudgalleries.co.uk

FUL PEOPLE

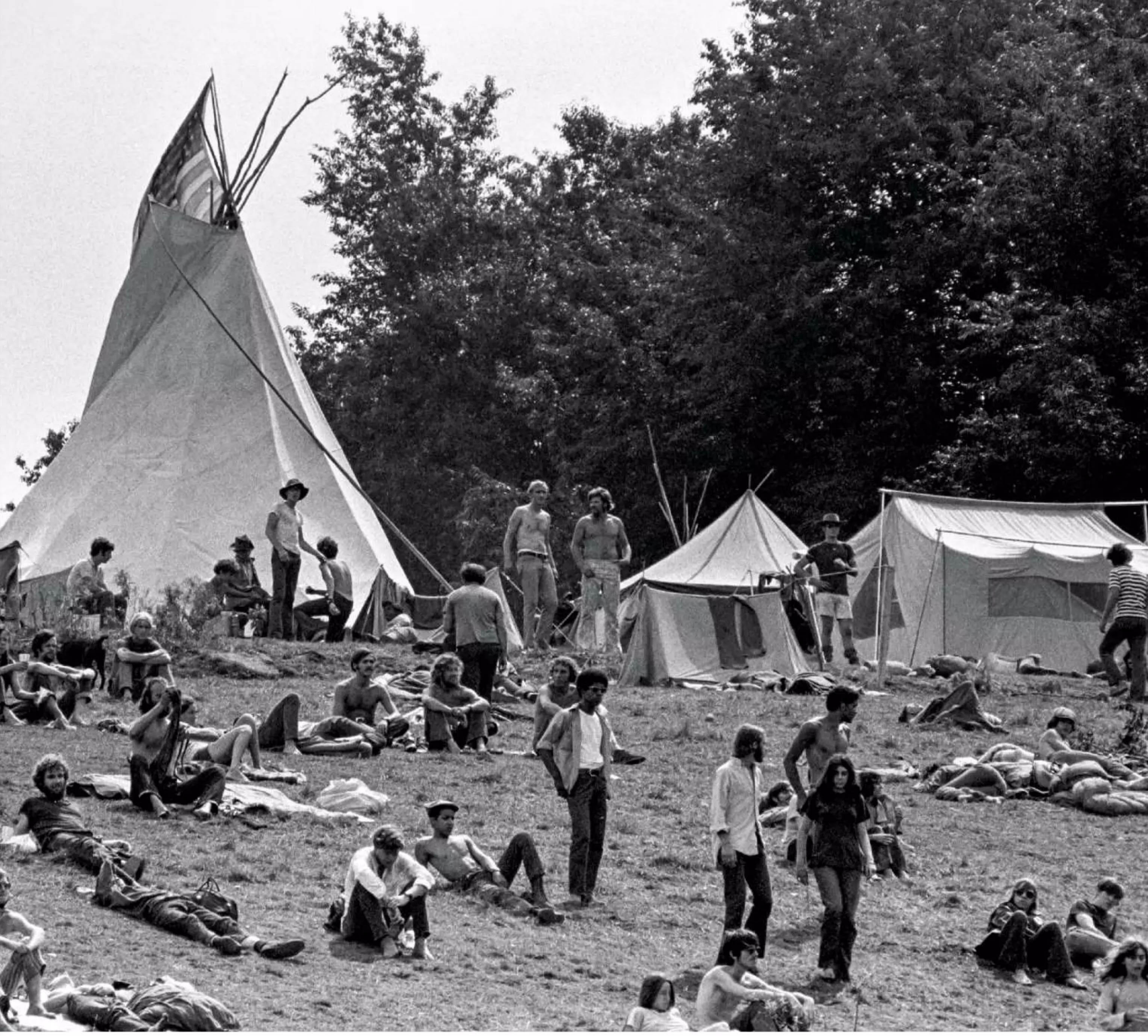
of his work celebrates the wild, wonderful Woodstock festival.

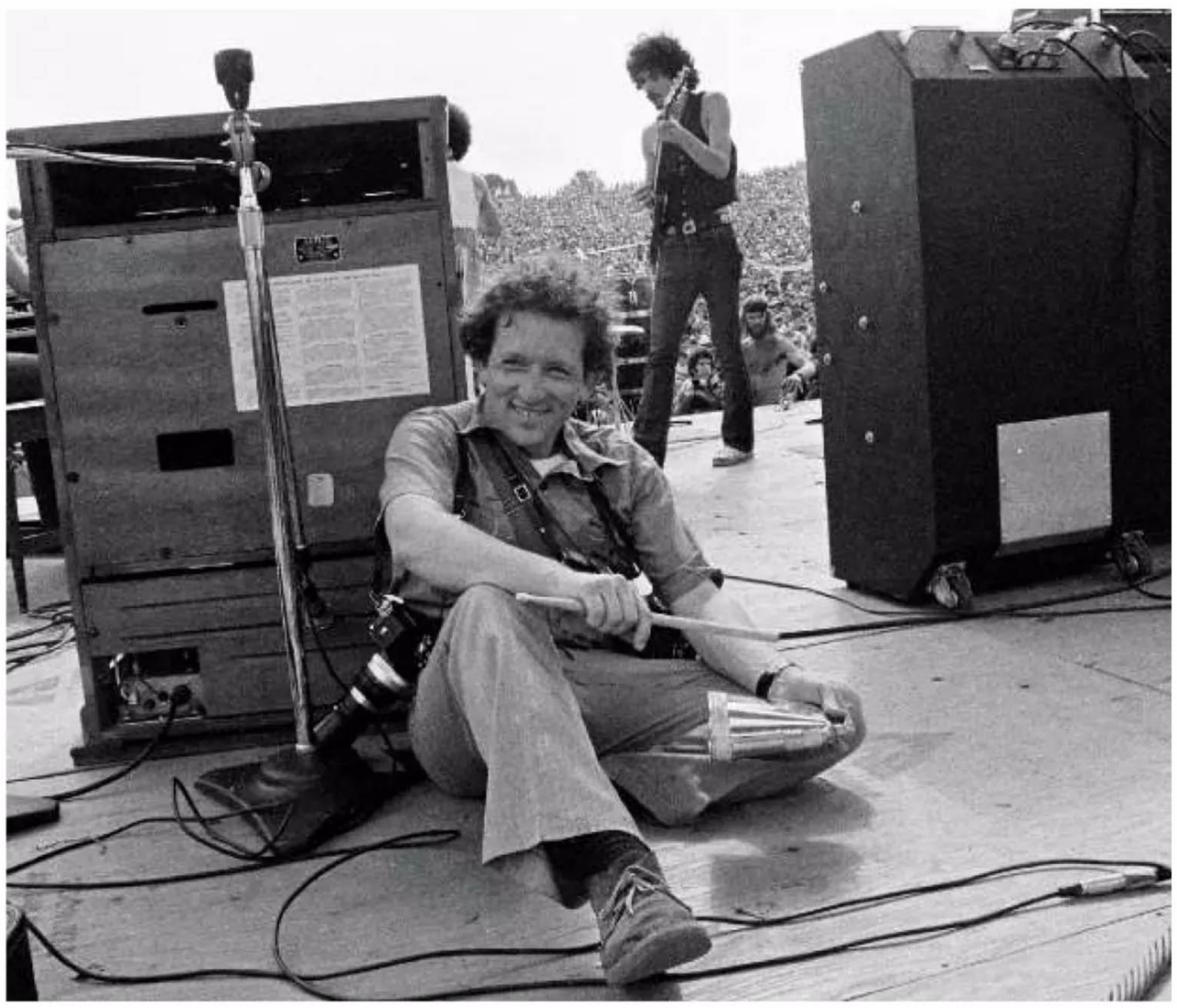
Back To Nature

Woodstock's organisers expected 50,000 people and ended up with over half a million. By the second day, a ramshackle city of canvas had sprung up around the festival site.

"Scuse Me While I Kiss The Sky..."

Audience members took their lives in their hands, and scaled the sound tower for a better view of the stage. Not advisable when tripping.





Picture This

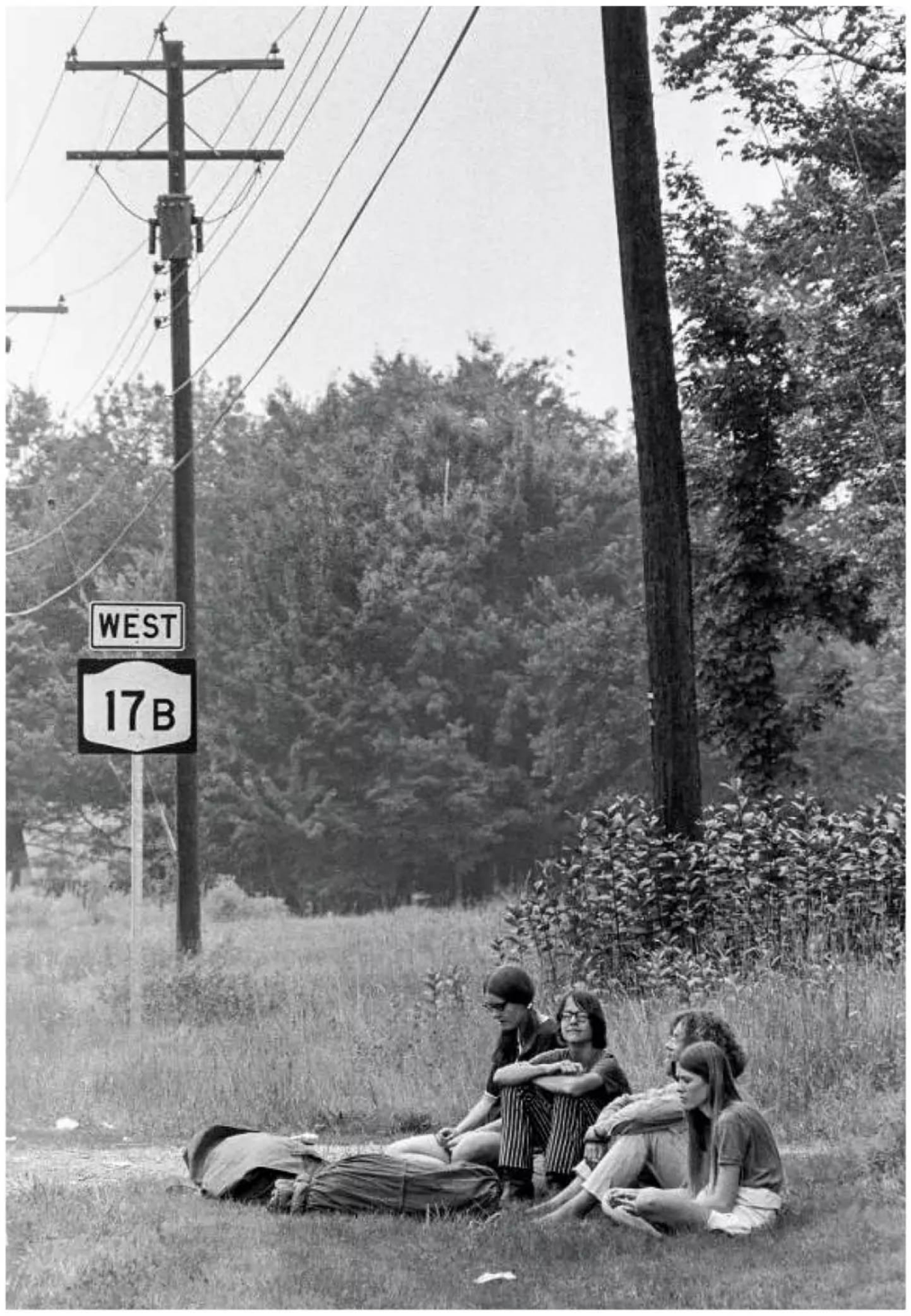
Baron Wolman (photographed by promoter Bill Graham) enjoying a breather and adding some extra percussion during Santana's performance.

© Baron Wolman

LOVE
YOUR
ANIMAL
FRIENDS
DONT EAT
THEM

Rhythm Kings

Santana in full flight. Their debut album was also released in August '69 and became a US Top 5 hit soon after their break-through Woodstock performance.



© Baron Wolman

Animal Crackers

(Far left) A vegetarian audience member makes the case for a meat-free, animal-loving lifestyle.

Going Up The Country

(Near left) Four young festival-goers refuse to keep off the grass by the side of 17B West Road in Bethel.

THE FUTU

Photofest

The Shadows were the pre-Beatles kings of Brit rock, a crack team who ruled early backing Cliff Richard. But behind Hank Marvin's totemic red Stratocaster and the

RE RACE

'60s Europe with moody hit instrumentals, gruelling tours and a regular gig group's cheesy grins lay a world of dark drama. Bob Stanley investigates. ➢

TONY MEEHAN, 15, IS kicking his heels in Kilburn one late '50s afternoon when his friend Dave Rees suggests a trip to Soho. He may as well have suggested Paris. Though just three or so miles south, Soho in the '50s is a square mile of shamelessness: madams and gamblers, thugs, beats and drop-outs. An endless bohemian carnival. Making their way past Chas McDevitt's Freight Train coffee bar, home of the fading skiffle scene, Tony hears a beautiful noise underneath the Old Compton Street pavement. He pays his six bob (bugger it, he'd walk home) and goes downstairs into a cellarful of noise. Before him is the first full flower of British rock'n'roll: suntanned Vince Taylor slumped by the jukebox; Cliff Richard in a luminous pink jacket, black shirt and white tie, smooth-skinned and pouting; chiselled Terry Nelhams, in a fine French crewneck top, hitting on a girl with implausible stilettos – next year he'll rechristen himself Adam Faith.

On-stage are two Geordies, spotty, 17 and crying out in true, close Everly Brothers harmony. Their bassist looks and sounds incredible. Bright blond hair and dark-hooded lids, no smile. Meehan remembers him from a gig at the Metropolitan on Edgware Road a year before. He'd been so impressed he'd even asked for his autograph – his name was Jet. But a year earlier Jet had been playing a stand-up bass like a jazz man – now he had a bass guitar, and it was unbelievably loud. Moreover, it was the only bass guitar in London.

Tony was wearing a cap just like one of Gene Vincent's Bluecaps. He felt pretty cool. So what if he'd been in shorts the previous summer? He had made his own drumsticks in woodwork lessons, and he was a teenager in the 2 I's in Soho in 1958. The drummer in this outfit, Meehan noted, wasn't all that. Tony asked to sit in on drums. They played Be-Bop-A-Lula. Within a year, these four teenagers would be The Drifters, backing group for the biggest teen idol in Britain. Within two, they would be The Shadows, the most widely imitated and influential group in pre-Beatles Britain, living the early-'60s high-life of sell-out Top Rank tours, variety shows and £50 a week. By 1964 The Beatles will have changed all that.

Movin': skiffle Babylon and Shadows nexus the 2 I's, Soho, April '61.

THE TWO GEORDIE SINGERS WERE NOT LONG IN London: they were Hank B. Marvin (né Brian Robson Rankin) and Bruce Welch. Marvin: "At school I was into folk blues. I bought a banjo for two pounds 10 shillings from a schoolmaster at Rutherford Grammar. With my first band, The Crescent City Skiffle Group, I saw myself as a bit bohemian with the college scarf and hair a little longer than was conventional. But you needed money to be a real bohemian."

Welch: "Hank looked the part. He wore a blue duffel coat. His dad had bought him a Hofner Congress for his 16th birthday, and my band, The Railroaders, needed a lead guitarist. From 14 our schooling just went out the window. We loved Lonnie Donegan and Elvis, and we wanted to be part of this thing. There was no way we could do it from Newcastle."

The boys saw an ad for a talent contest at the Granada Edmonton on April 6, 1958 and decided to enter. The Railroaders came third, but the journey to London wasn't wasted. Another band called The Velvets played, and Bruce and Hank were most impressed with their hard-hitting drummer, Brian Bennett. They also bumped into a singer called Pete Chester. The rest of The Railroaders headed home, but Bruce and Hank were hooked.

Marvin: "London seemed so vast compared to Newcastle. Even Kings Cross, where we were staying, seemed major. We went to a club called The Nucleus [on Monmouth Street]. That was really bohemian, it was dark and open late. And the people were interesting just because they looked like they didn't work. Ewan MacColl was singing and we thought, Wow, because we'd seen him on the telly. We decided to stay down and try to crack it."

The fame of the 2 I's coffee bar had spread since Tommy Steele was discovered there in 1956 and became a short-lived rock sensation. Now, anybody who wanted to be anything in pop hung out there, hustling, making reputations, working on the Coke or orange machines for 18 bob a week. Bruce and Hank were there every day. They also got together with Pete Chester, and enthusiastically began

songwriting at his parents' house in Hampstead Garden Suburb. Half-starved in their Finsbury Park bedsit, they would cadge poached eggs off Pete's mum. In no time they worked up a rickety but charming Everlys/Buddy Holly soundalike called Teenage Love which, as The Five Chesternuts, became their debut single.

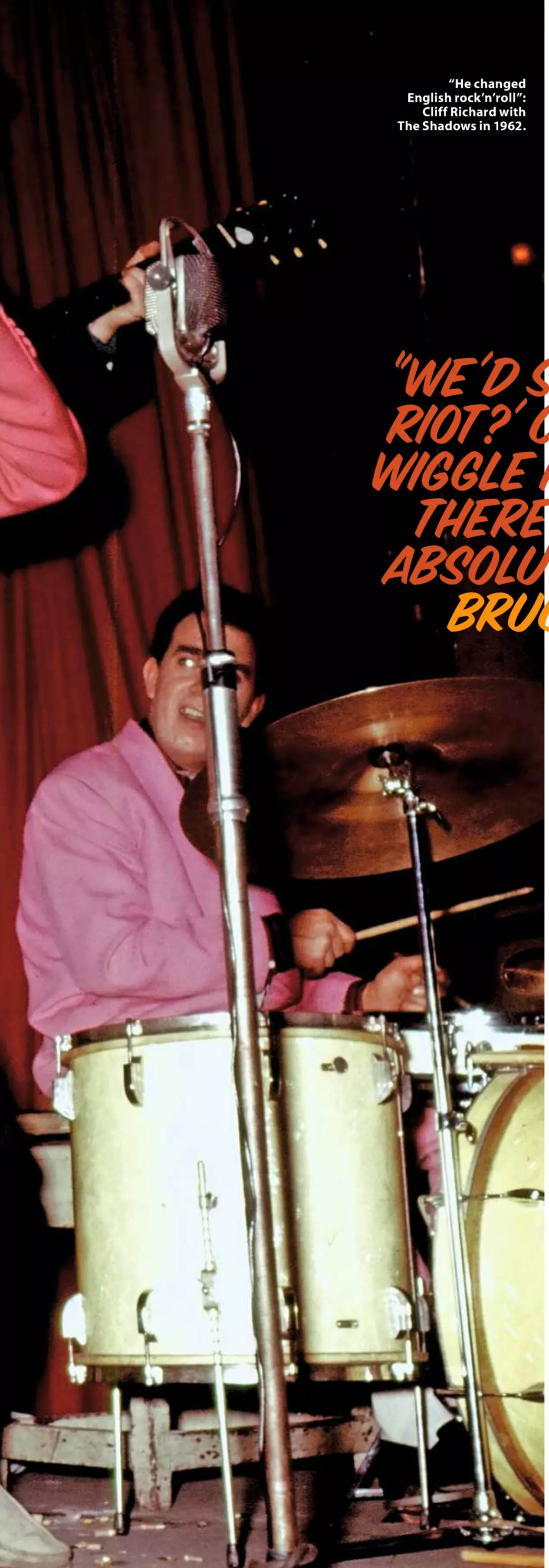
Back at the 2 I's, musicians were switching bands on a regular basis and it was only a matter of time before something exploded. Marty Wilde had charted with Endless Sleep in July, but Cliff Richard was the real firestarter. In September '58 he made his small-screen debut on Oh Boy. "His violent hip-swinging was revolting," the NME raged. "He was wearing so much eyeliner he looked like Jayne Mansfield."

Getty

"LONDON SEEMED SO VAST COMPARED TO NEWCASTLE. WE DECIDED TO TRY TO CRACK IT."
HANK MARVIN

Andrew Loog Oldham remembers it differently: "He performed Move It! and the earth stood still."

The same month, Cliff's manager, John Foster, was tipped off about a hot new guitarist at the 2 I's called Tony Sheridan. He needed someone for Cliff's October tour. When he arrived, Sheridan wasn't there but Hank Marvin was. He played the intro to That'll Be The Day and got the job. Hank's only proviso was that his mate Bruce Welch came along as rhythm guitarist. A couple of weeks later, with Move It! as a Top 10 rallying cry, Cliff Richard And The Drifters played Newcastle City Hall in front of Hank and Bruce's ex-schoolmates. Six months after a suburban talent contest, they were part of the revolution. ➢



"He changed English rock'n'roll": Cliff Richard with The Shadows in 1962.

"WE'D SAY, 'FANCY A RIOT?' CLIFF WOULD WIGGLE HIS LEGS AND THERE WOULD BE ABSOLUTE UPROAR."
BRUCE WELCH

➢ Move It! eventually peaked at Number 2. Jet Harris: "It really changed English rock'n'roll. I thought it was American."

Once the tour finished it was clear that 'Sammy' Samwell, the bassist, and drummer Terry Smart weren't up to it. Harris and Tony Meehan were quickly drafted in from Wally Whyton's Vipers, a group Hank had dabbled with prior to the Cliff tour. "Wally was good for me," Marvin says, "because he said, 'Why don't you play more single-note stuff?' I was already listening to Django Reinhardt, but didn't think it was much use to me. I saw what he was getting at, though, and opened up."

Cliff, Bruce, and Hank shared a flat on Marylebone High Street. Jet, a jazzbo at heart, stayed in his Belgravia basement flat "with a fox in the cellar, a monkey, and a skunk called Sam under my bed. He'd had his stink taken out." At 19, Jet was a relative veteran and became de facto leader of The Drifters – still, nothing had prepared him for Cliff mania.

"Our first gig as The Drifters was at Manchester Free Trade Hall. We couldn't believe what was happening to us. The women screaming. The adulation was incredible."

Welch: "I'd lay on my back and play solos. We'd say to Cliff, Do you fancy a riot tonight? Then he'd wiggle his legs a bit more and there would be uproar, absolute uproar."

Meehan: "We had a pet monkey on tour with us. It would crawl along the roof while we were driving. It was a travelling circus."

Hank Marvin: "I had this poxy monkey in a cage on my lap and it peed all over my brand new trousers. I was so angry. When the monkey got put in the dressing room I thought, You little so-and-so, and I peed all over it. I felt really bad as soon as I'd done it."

THE CLIFF AND THE DRIFTERS BANDWAGON rolled on, with Ian Samwell writing further hits High Class Baby (about actress Julie Samuel), Livin' Lovin' Doll (the first to feature the full line-up) and Mean Streak – solid generic rockers which skirted the Top 10. Cliff's first film, Serious Charge, included a song called Living Doll – given a country arrangement by Bruce Welch, it became their first Number 1 and the best-selling single of 1959. One fly in the ointment was an injunction from the American Drifters which had meant Cliff was backed by 'The Four Jets' in the States.

Harris: "Hank and I went off on our scooters to the Six Bells in Ruislip to think of a permanent new name."

Marvin: "We were prepared for a three-hour discussion when Jet said, 'What about The Shadows?' That was it."

The final piece of the jigsaw was brought from America, by Cliff. Marvin: "He bought me a red Stratocaster in 1959, and it played such a huge part in the development of my style. We loved James Burton's sound on the Ricky Nelson records, and we knew he played a Fender. Also, Buddy Holly had this outrageous looking guitar on the cover of The Chirping Crickets. There was an import ban on American guitars then, so we got the brochure and found out Buddy Holly's guitar was a Stratocaster. Because it was the most expensive one, we assumed that's what James Burton played. It was just stunning, even to look at."

While Cliff scored heavily with Travelling Light, Voice ➢

Allstar

< In The Wilderness, and Fall In Love With You, there had been three 45s (Feelin' Fine, Jet Black, Saturday Dance) by his backing band, none of which had caused much of a scene. But if they didn't sell, who cared? Cliff and The Shadows were the biggest thing in British pop.

Meehan: "We were on tour with Jerry Lordan who'd just had a hit with Who Could Be Bluer. And he had written a tune called Apache. Hank and Jet heard him play it on the ukulele. We were all bowled over, it was absolute dynamite. Jerry said, 'Bert Weedon has just done this really duff version, I'm not happy with it. Would you like to have a go?'"

Producer Norrie Paramor had arranged a novelty re-work of the army song Quartermaster's Stores for the next 45, but went along with recording Apache for the flip. An A&R man in his forties, Paramor had the nous to run both songs past his teenage daughter – she loved "the Indian one".

In the studio, Cliff had worked up an intro approximating the old West with a Chinese drum. Hank played clean and true, the atmosphere was dark and mysterious. Apache was a beautiful record and, released in August 1960 (with Tie Me Kangaroo Down Sport, Yellow Polka Dot Bikini and Tommy Steele's What A Mouth for company), it couldn't miss. It was Number 1 inside a month, knocking Cliff's Please Don't Tease, a Bruce Welch/Pete Chester composition, off the top.

So began a run of inspirational, evocative singles: Man Of Mystery, a TV crime theme; The Frightened City, edgy and clipped; Kon Tiki, exotic and inherently British, the rise of the Tilbury surf. Maybe the best was F.B.I., so solid and square-shouldered, with Hank's stinging Strat the very sound of shiny black American shoes. "One reviewer thought it stood for Fast Beaty Instrumental," remembers Hank.

Welch: "Hank became a guitar god – the most inventive player. 1958 to 1964 was the best stuff he ever played. Raucous, and not every note was perfect, but every kid wanted to be Hank Marvin."

Success for The Shadows without Cliff doubled the workload. Meehan: "It was such a pleasure to do our own concerts. It was a lot of men who'd bring their girlfriends, sit and listen. With Cliff, as soon as we hit the stage it was, EEEEEEAAAHH! You couldn't hear for the screaming. We may as well have been a heap of shit."

On-stage they were surprisingly fierce – check *Live At The ABC Kingston* for evidence. They were also aware they were entertainers. "We were a rock'n'roll band infringing on show business," says Welch, and they invented the much-copied, much-maligned Shadows walk for an extra thrill. Sexy it wasn't, but the girls still squealed. Meehan: "We toured every town, village and hamlet in Britain, at least 10 times, two shows a night, three on Saturday. Sometimes we'd fit in an extra Sunday concert when we'd get an extra fiver from Cliff, get the sleeper home and start again Monday. No holidays."

But 1961's The Savage would be the last record of the original line-up. Meehan's apparent laziness was getting up the others' noses, especially Hank's. After one gig they had a fight and Tony bit into Hank's finger. At another show in Leeds he turned up halfway through the set. When he pulled the same trick during a six-week season with Cliff in Blackpool, it was over.

Hank: "We had to do a show without him. Tony was a very arrogant guy, and he kept putting us in difficult situations, it was a great shame. I liked what he contributed, he was different, like an embryonic Keith Moon."

Meehan: "It was stale. I left because there was so much opposition to progress, especially from Bruce. He thought adding strings or horns or voices would mean it wasn't The Shadows any more. And, of course, afterwards they tried all sorts of things."

Jet Harris was also far from happy. His wife Carol had been having an affair with Cliff Richard. "They had a fling and I started drinking a bit more. I was stood behind Cliff every night, thinking about it, but I didn't want to lose my job. I was the last to know. Hank and Bruce had said to me, 'She's not the one for you, you know?', which, looking back, was rather nice of them. But that shit was all over the News Of The World. If anyone has a go about Cliff to me now, I shout them down. We were a mean band but, life-wise, we were only kids. We didn't know what day it was."

A FEW MONTHS AFTER TONY LEFT, JET WENT THE same way. "My drinking was getting worse, and Bruce's nerves were making me nervous. I knew how bad I was. I was topped-up but I was never falling about." After coming off stage at the NME Poll Winners concert at the Empire Pool, Wembley, in April '62, Bruce turned and said, "We don't really need you, Jet." He walked out on the spot.

Tony had turned to record production, learning from scratch under the auspices of Decca's Dick Rowe. In late '62, he teamed up with Jet once again – a chance to show Hank and Bruce the brave new world he'd envisaged for the Shads. Straight away, he came up with the ultra-modern Diamonds, a Number 1 in February '63, which featured eerie Morricone-like voices, mariachi brass, and Jet's bottomless six-string bass sound. They had two more Top 5 hits (Scarlett O'Hara and Applejack) and Meehan soon assembled a fearsome live band, including John McLaughlin on rhythm guitar, John Paul Jones on bass, and a brass section to rival Chicago.

But a hideous, widely publicised car crash at the end of '63 left Jet incapable of performing, his nerves in shreds. "That really put the tin hat on it," explained Jet. "I was asleep on Billie Davis's lap in the back of the car and a bus went into us. The bus was a write-off, that's how bad it was. I caught the ashtray full on my head and I was in and out of hospitals. I couldn't look at a guitar. I wouldn't even touch one." The stress had told on Meehan, too, and he virtually retired as a drummer. He was just 20 years old.

"TONY MEEHAN WAS AN ARROGANT GUY, AND HAD TO GO. BUT I LIKED HIS STYLE – HE WAS AN EMBRYONIC KEITH MOON." HANK MARVIN

Brian Bennett became the first 'new boy' at the tail end of '61. He'd known the band since the Edmonton talent contest, and had since played in the Tony Sheridan Trio, Vince Taylor's Playboys and Marty Wilde's Wildcats, aka The Krew Kats. When Jet left another ex-Krew Kat, Brian 'Liquorice' Locking, joined in April '62, just as Wonderful Land hit Number 1. The soundtrack to every new tower block, flyover, and gleaming post-war planning dream, Wonderful Land had a timeless melancholy – music for an impossible future. It spent two months at Number 1. The Shadows, for now, were untouchable.

Bennett: "We played at the Olympia in Paris and that was an absolute highlight. It was pre-Beatles Paris in the early '60s so we were the kings, walking through Montmartre and everybody would know who we were. I remember Oscar Peterson and Quincy Jones backstage, Ella Fitzgerald standing by the side of the stage going, 'Yeah!' while I played [drum solo] Little B. I couldn't believe it."

Getty

In sync: Shads at the NME Poll Winners Party, '62. (From left) Brian, Bruce, Jet, Hank.

Marvin: "Jacques Tati came backstage and asked us to write the title music for his new film. We wrote an uptempo tune, but we never did hear back from him." Given the name Foot Tapper, it was another Shadows Number 1 in the spring of '63.

NOT EVERY MOMENT WAS SO GOLDEN. THE wages were still a flat £50 a week and the workload was wall-to-wall. Bruce's obsession with tuning his guitar, which had driven Jet to distraction, was becoming a real problem. Marvin: "He'd spend hours tuning in front of the mirror, he reckoned the mirror helped somehow. At one theatre he'd run downstairs, hit a piano note, then run up four flights of stairs going, 'Dah dah dah', and tune to that. It cracked me up. But it got to the stage where he was throwing his guitar on the floor, walking out and leaving us to do the show without him. Appalling really. In retrospect, he should have gone the way of Tony Meehan."

Welch: "By 1963, we were the establishment. There wasn't a music industry, that's what you have to remember. We were doing variety shows – dancing girls, guys with budgies, unicycles. We were pioneers for everyone who came after, but we were the ones who still had to do pantos for four months. It was like a life sentence."

While the next generation's rock'n'roll stars were learning their chops in Hamburg, The Shadows were suffering in Stockton-on-Tees. Bennett: "Two or three months at the Globe Theatre. I hated panto. Getting thrown through a mangle by Arthur Askey every afternoon wasn't what I'd had in mind when I started drumming. We did as we were told. Then, of course, The Beatles came along and changed the rules."

The Beatles made Cliff and The Shadows look and sound like an antique, a walking museum, overnight. At first, Merseybeat hardly touched them commercially (1963 was their biggest year ever), but the arrival of the Stones, The Kinks, et al, turned the heat up.

Marvin: "In the mid-'60s, I just lost it totally, style-wise. I was trying to get away from the echo, thinking it was old fashioned. [On Stingray] I used some fuzzbox that sounded like a wasp in a bottle. Terrible. I was trying to find myself but just losing myself. It was a bad move." Liquorice Locking had left in late '63 to be replaced by the saturnine John Rostill.

Bennett: "I loved him. John Rostill and I, it was the best line-up – the empathy, it was a fabulous feeling."

At a stroke, they cut a tough single called The Rise And Fall Of Flingel Bunt. It was their last Top 5 hit. One way forward was a ➢

Out of time: Hank on the Stewpot show, 1970.

return to the harmony vocal group Hank and Bruce had envisaged in the first place – the minor-key Mary Anne was an A-side in early '65, followed by Mann & Weill's Don't Make My Baby Blue, which briefly put the Shads back in the Top 10.

Marvin: "George Harrison told us to pack in the instrumentals and concentrate on vocals. But we were stupid and didn't follow his advice, even though the writing was on the wall."

Another time at Abbey Road, Paul McCartney popped in and played Hank a tune on the piano. "He said, 'I can't think of any words for it, you guys could make a really nice job of it.' It was a lovely tune. He shot off and the next time we heard it was on *Revolver*. Here, There And Everywhere – he obviously thought of some words and then thought, 'Stuff them!'"

In 1966, Cliff Richard started talking openly about quitting pop – he wanted to be "an ordinary teacher in an ordinary secondary school". The same year, Welch met Olivia Newton-John who was great for his nerves but gave him a diminished sense of team spirit. On record, the Shads cut some of their best, hardest sides (Late Night Set, Scotch On The Socks), as well as Hank's melancholy, Beach Boys-inspired The Dreams I Dream.

Bennett: "The end of the '60s was the worst of times. Silly things used to happen. We went to Korea and some crazy fan banged on the door and asked for an autograph, and Hank asked John for a pen. So he signed the thing and gave him the pen. John said, 'You've just given him my pen.' And Hank said, 'But it was a fucking Bic.' And that went on for about an hour… if you put four creatures in a small room, Lord Of The Flies is going to happen."

WITH FALLING CHART POSITIONS, THE GROUP seemed incapable of getting off an early-'60s treadmill – recording an album a year, writing pantos, getting thrown through the mangle.

Bennett: "Then we started playing the working men's clubs instead of theatres. You'd go on at midnight in front of loads of pissed blokes going, 'Give us Apache', and, 'Is Cliff a poof?'"

Teetotal Bruce had solved his tuning trouble in 1963 by paying John Rostill £10 a week to do it for him; five years later, Rostill was, sullenly, still doing it. He suffered a nervous breakdown after splitting with his girlfriend in 1968, and Liquorice Locking was back for the duration of a Talk Of The Town season. Months later Bruce quit, temporarily, on an Australian tour of half-empty theatres.

Bennett: "We were like rats in a box. Hank was thinking of giving up playing. He wanted to be a comedian. The new Woody Allen. I couldn't understand it."

The curtain came down on Britain's most influential band before The Beatles at the London Palladium on December 19, 1968. One final single, the elegiac five-minute Slaughter On Tenth Avenue, sneaked out a few months later. Hardly anyone noticed.

Writing Pop From The Beginning in 1969, Nik Cohn quickly put The Shadows' legacy in perspective: "They were fiercely worshipped and imitated and, on the Continent, they were the most influential sound ever. In Spain or Italy or Yugoslavia, they're regarded as the pop giants of all time. Elvis Schmelvis. Beatles Schmeatles. Viva los Shads!"

It's impossible to overstate their influence on British pop. Brian May taped Foot Tapper off the radio and learnt to play it before the record was even in the shops. For Pete Townshend, they are "a living myth… frozen in my mind as one of the greatest passions of my life."

Since the split in 1968, there have been reunions, Eurovisions, *20 Golden Greats* and *Reunited*, a 2009 album of re-recordings with Cliff. Hank seems inordinately proud of their 1979 version of Don't Cry For Me Argentina. Tony Meehan, who passed away in 2005, reckoned they lost it in 1963 and were going through the motions since. Rostill was electrocuted by his own guitar in 1973, and Harris died in 2011, a year after The Shadows officially called it a day for good. But for anyone who ever strummed a tennis racquet in front of their bedroom mirror, there's always their back catalogue of singular recordings to enjoy. Viva los Shads! M

Rex Features

THE DARK STUFF

The hard-edged flipside to that cool Shadows sound. By Toerag Studios supremo Liam Watson.

I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Arthur

(B-side, The War Lord, Columbia single, 1965)
A twangy mid-'60s beat rocker. Written by the late great John Rostill.

Late Night Set

(B-side, Late Night Set, Columbia single, 1966)
Hank and the boys kick off 1966 with rasping lead guitar playing over a tuff beat-style arrangement. Unexpected use of a tone pedal is a feature of the groovy middle-eight.

Jack's Good – The Krew Kats

(B-side to Samovar, HMV, 1961)
Possibly the best track by Brian Bennett and Liquorice Locking's pre-Shads band. With its terrific dance beat, fantastic scratchy lead guitar and impressively deep bass, this hard-hitting balls-to-the-floor reverb rocker is in a class of its own.

Scotch On The Socks

(B-side, The Dreams I Dream, Columbia single, 1966)
Thanks to its great dancefloor appeal, Scotch On The Socks is currently in demand among DJs and nightclub audiences who enjoy its great bass tone, pounding drums and unusual tone pedal guitar work.

Main Title Theme – Jet Harris

(Decca single, 1962)
Jet's second solo 45 is a superbly menacing six-string bass take on The Man With The Golden Arm. The whole production is an absolute killer.

The Rise And Fall Of Flingel Bunt

(Columbia single, 1964)
One of the Shads' last big hits of the '60s has a very catchy laid-back guitar melody. Brian Bennett's drumming is superb, especially good when played in a discotheque-type situation.

Rhythm And Greens

(Columbia EP, 1964)
The Shads' rarely seen film Rhythm And Greens spawned a great instrumental EP featuring a host of killer beat-style numbers, including the raucous, novelty R&B title track.
Available on: The Shadows Collection (EMI 3-CD set)

Benno-San

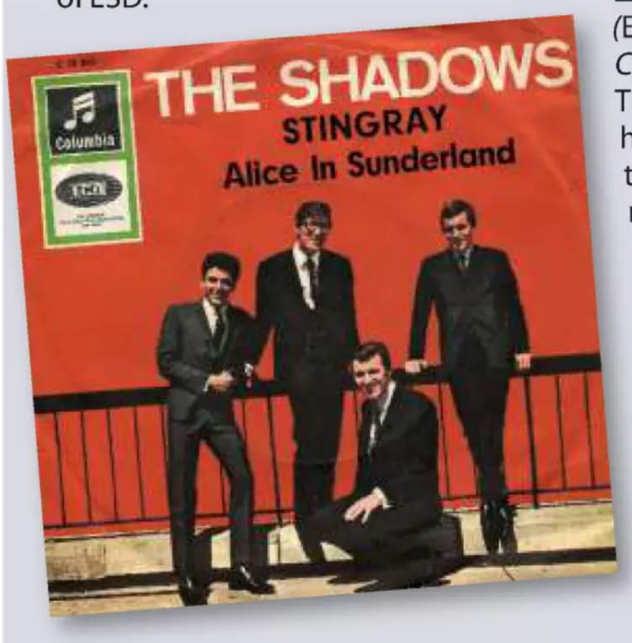
(Shadow Music LP track, Columbia, 1966)
Nifty-sounding drum and percussion breaks are the high point of this crackling fuzz-tone guitar rocker.

Alice In Sunderland

(B-side, Stingray, Columbia single, 1965)
The Shads go way-out in a pre-psychedelic fashion. Which means not too far out… but they produce an interesting sound and melody which could possibly be enjoyable while under the influence of LSD.

Naughty Nippon Nights

(Hank Bruce Brian And John LP track, Columbia, 1967)
Hank gets flashy on a speedy, almost frantic piece that is possibly fast and fancy enough for even the dumbest of long-haired noise enthusiasts to appreciate.



Voyage To The Bottom Of The Bath

(Established 1958 LP track, Columbia, 1968)
The Shadows' unique sense of humour gave some fine titles and this is as good as any. A funky medium-tempo fuzz-tone number adorned with novel sped-up guitar solos.

Goodnight Dick – Hank Marvin

(Columbia single, 1969)
Solo Hank gets hairy on this heavily-arranged late '60s bell-bottom rocker.

C'est La Vie

Controversial, suave, "ugly-beautiful", Serge Gainsbourg was raised in a Jewish family in pre-war Paris and almost 30 before he made his first music. But by the late '60s he'd become a Gallic icon and, thanks to the hypnotic eroticism of Je T'aime… Moi Non Plus, a global star. Sylvie Simmons unravels the story of an extraordinary talent.

Come dance with me: Serge Gainsbourg with Brigitte Bardot on the set of Voulez Vous Danser Avec Moi, 1958.

IF YOU WALK INTO THE MONTPARNASSE Cemetery, the first thing you see is the enormous stone double bed where Charles Pigeon – the inventor of the unexplodable gas lamp – perpetually contemplates mounting his sleeping wife. Then, moving on past the tomb of Baudelaire, off the Avenue Principale is a spot of prime real estate that holds the remains of Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone De Beauvoir and J.K. Huysmans. There, in the middle of it all, is a plain, flat concrete slab, hidden, like an existentialist Crackerjack episode, beneath a mound of Metro tickets, cabbages, fluffy toys, Pastis bottles and Gitanes cigarettes. In March 1991, Serge Gainsbourg was brought to Montparnasse Cemetery dead from a heart attack – the night after celebrating his partner Bambou's 29th birthday, and a month before he would have celebrated his 63rd. France went into mourning.

"The whole place was in tears, nothing on TV but Gainsbourg all day long," recalls Saint Etienne's Bob Stanley, who was visiting Paris at the time. "It was like a head of state had died." Police blocked off the streets around his house in Saint-Germain as Diana-esque crowds descended. Flags on public buildings flew at half mast. Politicians lined up to give eulogies. Minister of Culture Jack Lang (who three years earlier had awarded him – and Clint Eastwood – the L'Officier De L'Ordre Des Arts Et Des Lettres medal) spoke of his "sensuality" and "Rimbaudian sense of humour". President Mitterand declared him "our Baudelaire, our Apollinaire… He elevated the song to the level of Art." "My favourite song is Harley Davidson," said the Mayor of Paris and future president Jacques Chirac, "imprinted in my heart, because it was sung by Bardot whom I liked very much." (He was also rather fond of Gainsbourg's album with Vanessa Paradis.)

"Ask anyone in Paris," says Nicolas Godin of French synth-pop duo Air, "and they can remember what they were doing when they heard Gainsbourg had died. It was such a shock. Because he was always there, part of our culture. He was a poet and a punk. And he wanted to fuck Whitney Houston."

The man who looked like a louche turtle cross-bred with a dissipated, chain-smoking wolf was also a singer, songwriter, actor, painter, cutting-edge composer, Eurovision Song Contest winner, novelist, screenwriter, film director, provocateur, sentimentalist, populist, intellectual and the single most important person in the history of French pop music. Although "terrifically lazy", according to former wife Jane Birkin ("he would never write anything unless really pushed"), his output was staggeringly prodigious – a complete CV would take up most of this magazine. And yet outside of France, until his reconstruction in the late '80s and beyond – via Mick Harvey, Jimmy Somerville, Momus, High Llamas, Saint Etienne, through Suede, Pulp, Divine Comedy and on to Air, David Holmes and Beck – Gainsbourg was known for just the one song: his 1969 hit with Jane Birkin, Je T'Aime… Moi Non Plus.

HE WAS BORN LUCIEN Ginzburg in Paris 1928, one of a pair of mixed-sex twins, named after a brother who had died three years earlier. He was nicknamed, to his chagrin, Lulu. His father Joseph worked as a pianist in Pigalle's nightclubs and transvestite joints; sometimes Lulu would tag along. He learned piano from a classical teacher, guitar from a gypsy, but decided he would be a painter. Studying and teaching art by day and moonlighting as a bar pianist at night, in his late twenties (and just before divorcing his first wife, a surrealist poet's secretary) he changed his mind. "He said if he couldn't be Francis Bacon he'd tear up his stuff," says Birkin, and he did. "And then he started writing songs – sophisticated, cynical songs mostly about not being loved that he didn't dare sing himself. Lucien Ginzburg was this shy Jewish refugee who thought he was ugly and who looked so young that the prostitutes used to scream at him, 'Come back in a few years when you're the right age' – when he was the right age." So when he registered his songs he used a new name: "Serge, because it sounded more Russian than Lucien, which reminded him of hairdressers; Gainsbourg because he loved the English painter Gainsborough. And little by little he started to sing his songs himself. He couldn't remember his own words because they were so clever, so he wrote them down on a piece of paper and when his hands would shake so much in front of the chic nightclub audiences he'd roll the paper into a ball and chuck it at them, and they'd burst into applause."

His first album came out in '58 – *Du Chant À L'Une!*, songs about removal men, alcohol and a Metro ticket collector who shoots himself, set to beatnik cocktail-jazz. This and the various records and soundtracks that took him into the '60s attracted a small cult following among France's Left Bank intellectuals, but nothing compared to the success of the British and American pop invaders: Bill Haley and Le Twist, then The Beatles and 'les yé-yé'. Yé-yé struck terror in the heart of the conservative French music business. Kids were hauled off the streets and into the studios to flood the country with French versions of Gerry And The Pacemakers songs. A 19-year-old Françoise Hardy made an album called *C'est Fab!*. And Serge was wretched.

"When these guys with their electric guitars arrived," he said, "I felt, it's all over for me." In his thirties, he was in pop terms an old man; his songs weren't about puppy love but French literature – Le Rock De Nerval, La Chanson De Prévert – or cynically cerebral like En Relisant Ta Lettre, where the protagonist, reading his lover's suicide note, comments on her grammatical errors. He thought about going back to painting; he wrote his pop obituary, the resolutely untwistable Requiem Pour Un Twisteur. Then he thought again and decided to try recording in England. "He was very bright," says Birkin. "He twigged onto things before anybody else. And he liked the English sound better."

"He adored working in England," says Philippe Lerichomme, Gainsbourg's long-time producer. "The culture among the musicians wasn't the same in France, so the sound was different. The musicians he worked with in England cut their teeth on rock music, whereas musicians of the same age in France cut theirs on accordion music."

"He used the cream of the session musicians," recalls Alan Hawkshaw, arranger and composer (the Grange Hill theme, The Champ, Countdown, et al), who was then one of Britain's top session keyboard players. "He liked to stick to the same guys because after one or two run-throughs, which is all you would get, they'd sound as if they'd been ➢

Boy wonder: Lucien Ginzburg, aged seven, 1934.

Opening spread Getty, Rex Features, Getty

playing together all their lives. And Serge was always wanting to experiment."

Gainsbourg Percussions, for instance, in 1964, featured his first foray into world music and African rhythms. Not that the record-buying public appreciated his efforts. When Serge toured with Barbara – a Left Bank singer, one of few women allowed into the intellectual Brel/Brassens club, and the very antithesis of yé-yé – he was booed off-stage. He would not venture back again for 14 years.

By the mid-'60s all manner of people had had hits in France with Gainsbourg's songs – Petula Clark, Nana Mouskouri, Juliette Gréco – everyone except Gainsbourg. And he wanted one desperately. "I want to be a star in 1965. I've waited six years. That's enough," he told an interviewer, adding that he would do it by "throwing myself into rock" and boasting that he would write a dozen hit rock songs that year. First, he tossed off a Eurovision Song Contest winner (for Luxembourg; the French didn't want it), Poupée De Cire Poupée De Son, sung by France Gall, one of those pre-pube pop girls the French are so fond of. He suddenly found himself with a yé-yé hit.

Post-Eurovision, Serge turned out song after song for just about everyone in France. He also pursued an acting career that had

"He was incredibly attractive. You knew that if you did go to bed with him, you would come out of the room well pleased."

Marianne Faithfull

begun in the '50s and progressed through various bad-guy roles. The end of 1965 found him back searching for rock stardom, working in London with studio veteran Arthur Greenslade and his "extrêment pop" orchestra on classics like Dr Jekyll Et Monsieur Hyde. "French rock before there was French rock," declared Gainsbourg. "An attempt," said critics, "to fuse intelligent words to 'un rhythme du jerk'" – the dance, not the pastime.

For the next two years he carried on as a one-man songwriting factory. When the Brittany authorities asked him to write a song celebrating its brave soldiers and the glory of their region (currently a little upset over the reduction of their fishing limits), Serge obliged. Ditto when Israel requested an inspirational march for their army to use during the Six Day War. But there were plenty of gems in the muck-heap, among them his music for the superb 1967 French TV musical Anna, starring Danish actress-model Anna Karina. One of its songs, Hier Ou Demain, was released in France, sung by Marianne Faithfull.

Faithfull was 17 when she first met Gainsbourg in Paris through mutual friends. "He was a poet, a genius and an egotist, the sort of person I have always got on with, and we became very good friends. Sex was one way of relating with Serge – probably his favourite way for a woman – but we had a philosophical affinity, a serious platonic friendship based on surrealism, poetry and Oscar Wilde. So naturally he wanted me to be in Anna and he wrote this song for me called Hier Ou Demain. The next step after that little TV film for him would have been for us to write together. But it was one of those things: you're both in your own visions and you put them on the back-burner, and then it's too late."

The Serge-composed single, Harley Davidson,1967.

Alamy

Gainsbourg's vision was increasingly focused on Brigitte Bardot. They first met in 1958 while making the film Voulez-Vous Danser Avec Moi? and became reacquainted on Sacha Distel's TV show. She invited him to write her some songs. When her producers suggested a song about motorbikes – they liked the idea of plastering France with posters of B.B. straddling a hog in thigh-high boots and black leather mini-skirt – Serge knocked out Harley Davidson overnight.

He had recently split from his second wife Béatrice, and Bardot's marriage to playboy Gunther Sachs was in trouble. Before long they were an

item. Their first date was a disaster; Gainsbourg was dumb with nerves. Bardot phoned the next day and demanded that in penance he write her "the most beautiful love song you can imagine". He wrote two: Bonnie And Clyde and Je T'Aime… Moi Non Plus.

BARDOT AND GAINSBOURG RECORDED JE T'Aime… in an intimate, two-hour session late one winter's night in '67. Very intimate. French newspapers reported Serge and his latest conquest "making love" in the steamy studio booth while the tape rolled. Bardot's husband was furious and demanded they pull the song from her TV show. Gainsbourg protested – "The music is very pure; for the first time in my life I write a love song and it's taken badly" – but Bardot gave in.

"We all know Bardot is an idiot," grunts Marianne Faithfull. "When Serge had her she was in peak condition, tip-top form, but always very conformist." Serge later approached Marianne to re-record the song with him. "I don't know why I turned him down; I'd say, to my shame, that I was wrapped up in the beginning of my affair with Mick Jagger and he wouldn't have liked it. Maybe I was too young, too embarrassed – I'm sexual, but in a very different way. I'd accept now, but at the time, being the angel… actually, that would have made it even funnier. I wish I'd done it."

When Bardot broke up with her singing partner, Gainsbourg, being a Frenchman, had two options: throw himself in the Seine, which he said he would do, or go out with as many beautiful women as he could find. He opted for plan B, writing songs for several of them. Already one of France's hottest songwriters, he'd become one of its best known *séducteurs* too. Women's magazines went on about beauty-and-the-beast syndrome. Gainsbourg shrugged gallically: "Ugliness has more going for it than beauty. It endures."

Marianne Faithfull: "He was incredibly attractive. Ugly-beautiful. Extremely arrogant – and very sexual. This is a man that you always knew if you did go to bed with him, you would come out of that room well pleased."

➤ Alan Hawkshaw: "He always seemed to wear the same outfit, black pinstripe jacket with jeans, big shirt and these white slip-ons, no socks, and he always looked like he needed a shave. He just had something that women liked."

Gainsbourg met his third wife, Jane Birkin, in 1968 on the set of the French film Slogan. He was 40, she was 20, separated from her husband, film composer John Barry. It was not love at first sight. Birkin: "He had been rather put out when I met him because I thought he was called Serge Bourguignon – I suppose that was the only French thing I had heard of, in cooking – and, of course, he was rather well-known." Plus he had wanted Marisa Berenson for the role of the woman he seduced, not this little-known English actress who had taken her clothes off in the film Blow-Up. On second thoughts…

"When Serge asked me to do a new version of Je T'Aime… Moi Non Plus with him I said no," recalls Birkin. "The Bardot version was too impressive, and I was jealous." Marianne Faithfull: "I don't know how he got Jane to do it because she was such a lovely English upper-class schoolgirl – but of course he would have got her to do it by fucking her brains out. And it was perfect for Jane."

Birkin: "He liked working with women, especially actresses, because he could tell them what to do – make them sing like he sang, very close to the microphone and whisper sensually. He found it far more interesting to make beautiful actresses sing than girls with beautiful voices."

Rumours this time around had the couple recording a live sex session with a tape-machine under the bed. "Serge said: 'Thank goodness it wasn't, otherwise it would have been a long-playing record.' We made it very boringly in Marble Arch, both of us in sort of telephone cabins. When you recorded in the old days you only had two takes, and he was very afraid I was going to go on with the heavy breathing two seconds longer and miss the very high note – an octave higher than the Bardot recording – so he was waving at me like a madman from his cabin."

They went straight back with the tape to Paris, to the hotel where they lived (and where Oscar Wilde had died), gave it to the man who played the "slow, discreet background dinner music" in the wine-cellar restaurant, and sat back. "Everybody's knives and forks were in the air, suspended. Nobody went on eating. Serge said, 'I think we've got a hit.'"

So did the record company boss. "He said, 'Serge, I'm willing to go to prison but I'd rather go for a long-playing record, so go back to London and do another 10 songs.' They put it out in a plain plastic cover with 'interdite aux moins de 21 ans'. In Italy the head of Phonogram went to prison. The Vatican excommunicated him. Then they heard about the record in South America through this Vatican newspaper and it got slipped back into Italy hidden in Maria Callas sleeves. Even when it came out in England the BBC would only play the orchestral version." The original version, of course, shot to Number 1, the first foreign-language single to do so.

Alamy

Pin-Ups: with Andréa Parisy in the film poster for 1969's Slogan.

Frankie Howerd and June Whitfield did a spoof version. Countless British babies were conceived. At the end of the '60s and at the age of 41, Gainsbourg finally had his hit – six million copies of the single sold worldwide. An album was rushed out in France, *Jane Birkin – Serge Gainsbourg* (highlights included 69 Année Erotique and L'Anamour). France's John and Yoko left the tabloids behind to make a film in Nepal.

It was while Jane was making a film in France without Serge (the not-quite-classic comedy Mustard Goes Up My Nose) that Gainsbourg started work on his masterpiece, *Histoire De Melody Nelson*. "He was bored because he had to wait for me to come back. His songs were very much more sophisticated than the stuff I was turning out in movies." Its seven tracks tell the story of a middle-aged Frenchman in a Rolls-Royce running into a teenage cyclist. They fall in love, go off to a hotel together (this time there was a tape-machine under the bed; on L'Hôtel Particulier you can hear Jane being tickled), but soon young Melody becomes homesick – for Sunderland! – and she flies back. The plane crashes, leaving behind a crazed and broken man.

"When I first met Serge he had given me a little leather-covered book called Chansons Cruelles in which he wrote a dedication," says Birkin. "It says, 'To Jane Mallory' – my second name – 'for whom I shall write the story of Mallory, or the story of Melody Nelson.' So he already had the idea in 1968, when he met me. He never ran over me on a bike, nor was I a minor for that matter, although I was 20 years younger than him. He had bought an old Rolls-Royce – we had done a film in Yugoslavia where he got paid in cash, so it tickled him pink to buy a Rolls with Communist money." As he couldn't drive, it tickled him even pinker simply to use it as an ashtray.

"The actual recording in Marble Arch was one of the most exciting things. We were ecstatic. My brother Andrew was so enthusiastic he got a demo and ran to every single English disc jockey he knew to have it played. He was absolutely convinced that it was going to be an overnight hit. But even in France it wasn't a hit."

Still, discerning French critics hailed it as "the first true symphonic poem of the pop age". "Musical literature," raved Isabelle Adjani. "One of my favourite albums," said Françoise Hardy. "Musically completely new, extremely refined, and utterly, inimitably original."

"It can be seen," wrote Alan Clayson in his Serge Gainsbourg biography View From The Exterior, "as bridging a gap between the late 1960s magnum opi contemporaneous with *S.F. Sorrow* by The Pretty Things – the first rock opera – and *Sgt. Pepper* and, with *Tubular Bells*, setting the syncretic and expensive standard, the 'works' of the mid-'70s albums, with interlocking themes, leitmotivs, segues." Serge followed it with his dance invention La Décadanse: grab partner's breasts from behind, shove groin in butt and move.

Birkin: "By the time he had the cover for *Melody Nelson* done, he'd decided that he wanted Melody to have red hair, so they bunged a wig on me and put on freckles. I'm holding my monkey – which I buried with Serge because he always wanted it – in front of my jeans. I had them open as I was pregnant with Charlotte."

In 1973, the year after marrying Jane, Serge had his first heart attack. Birkin: "Unbeknown to me he used to keep his little medicine bottles, half-fill them with water, extinguish his cigarettes in them and put them in the drawer by his bed. When he left they found millions of these tiny bottles filled up with nicotine. He always smoked. When he was writing songs it was cigarettes and black coffee all night through." He was still writing inexhaustibly, producing in the year of his heart attack an album for Jane, a film soundtrack and his own dissipated *Vu De L'Extérieur* – songs about sex-dolls, farting and coprophagy.

Hawkshaw: "He often said to me it's a shame I couldn't understand the words. I only looked at it from a musical point, me doing this heavy rock stuff and funky backing tracks and him doing this calm, up-front, spoken-word vocal."

"He had been rather put out when I first met him, because I thought he was called Serge Bourguignon, and of course he was rather well-known in France." Jane Birkin

MEANWHILE, JANE'S SINGING VOICE – AND acting skills – werefinding more favour with the French than her husband's. "I was Mr Birkin – I didn't like that," he said. So when he wrote her a film – Je T'Aime… Moi Non Plus, where she plays Johnny, a girl who hangs around with two raping, murderous gay truckers – he stayedbehind the cameras as director. Some French critics called it "shocking and provocative", more called it "ordure". François Truffaut stepped forward to defend it. In Britain it was only shown in Soho.

Birkin: "It came out the same year as Last Tango In Paris and the British critics had been so vulgar as to say, 'Didn't Mr Gainsbourg know that butter existed?' I was furious. Now it's on all year round in France as a cult movie and hasn't dated at all." (The soundtrack album featured three instrumental versions of Je T'Aime and the fine Ballade De Johnny Jane.)

Gainsbourg's next album was also provocative: *Rock Around The Bunker* comprised of Hitler meets '50s rock'n'roll. "As he was Jewish, he was probably the only person who would have the idea to write 'get your black stockings on, boys, we're going to do the Nazi rock'. Extremely funny – but a great failure. Too shocking."

Hawkshaw: "Zig Zig Avec Toi and all that *Rock Around The Bunker* stuff, Ex-Fan Des Sixties, Melody Interdite – I did a lot of composition without becoming a 'writer', but they paid me well so I didn't argue. When we normally did ➢

a session we were used to being given the parts to play and we'd just play them, but the first session with Serge – 1970, I think – he didn't know any parts, he only had a few bars of a piece that he'd got an idea of. So I said, Look, if we're going to get this done, let me just extend these and you've got a piece of music. After that I did several of his and Jane's LPs – and Isabelle Adjani's and Catherine Deneuve's. I'd go over to Paris, take Serge's fragmented songs and pull them into full-length pieces."

Birkin: "He adored the English musicians he worked with – especially Alan Hawkshaw. He used to live with him and his wife while they were recording and come back with anecdotes about Hawkshaw's wife making him scones."

Hawkshaw: "He was a really lovely guy and very funny – other than the fact that he's blowing Gauloises in your face all the time. He drank and smoked like you would not believe. Insecure too, in a lot of ways. We worked at Philips Studios in Marble Arch for quite a while, and then we started to do the albums at my studio in Hertfordshire. It was unusual for him to stay out of town because he would never walk anywhere – even if he was in London, if he had to go 300 yards he would get in a cab."

GAINSBOURG'S SECOND CONCEPT ALBUM WAS *L'Homme À Tête De Chou* (The Man With The Cabbage Head), a mix of world, country and dark French mutterings about a man who kills his lover and is so consumed by misery and masturbation that his head turns vegetable. "He got the idea," said Philippe Lerichomme, "from a sculpture by Claude Lalanne that he had at his house. The thing fascinated him." The LP – the first of Gainsbourg's that Lerichomme produced – came out in 1976, in the middle of punk. The French rock press loved it. New Wave/power-punk trio Bijou (a bit like The Jam, but French) sought him to cover one of his more obscure songs, Les Papillons Noirs. Serge, who offered to help out in the studio, wrote them another, and agreed to join them on tour – his first time onstage in 14 years.

"He was very anxious," recalls Bijou's producer Jean-William Thoury. "He still suffered from dreadful stage-fright. Their first show together was in Epernay, the capital of champagne country, so that helped, and after they'd done around 10 dates it gave him the feeling that he wanted to get back onstage. He made his big comeback immediately afterwards when he did his first reggae album."

After *Melody Nelson* and *Cabbage Head*," says Birkin, "Serge was going to do a third concept record – about a man having a heart attack in an English taxi and having flashbacks while the meter turned. Then Philippe Lerichomme, his great producer, said, 'There are great things going on in Jamaica, Serge – reggae.' So he dropped the concept album and went off to Jamaica and did reggae – for the first time in French. He already had the marvellous idea of doing a reggae version of the French national anthem, La Marseillaise."

Holy smoke: with director Pierre Grimblat and co-star Jane Birkin at the premiere of Slogan, August 1969.

"He was constantly drinking in the studio, though he never looked

Lerichomme: "I contacted Chris Blackwell at Island, and I said I would like to hire Robbie Shakespeare, Sly Dunbar, the I-Threes, etc, and we went out in September '78. It didn't start out too well: when we arrived in Jamaica the engineer we couldn't really communicate with because Jamaicans speak a special kind of English which we found difficult to understand, and Robbie didn't know which one of us was the singer and kept talking to me – because Serge was older than me and was wearing a suit.

It was quite tense. Serge, to try to ease the atmosphere, tried to talk to them and said, 'Do you know any French music?' and they started to take the piss out of us, saying, 'French music? We're Jamaican.'

Serge and I looked at each other, crestfallen. This wasn't good. Then Sly said, 'We know just one piece of French music, a song called Je T'Aime which has a girl groaning in it.' And Serge said in English, 'It's me.' And that changed the whole mood. We recorded very, very fast and when it was done they didn't want to leave – they hung around the studio to hear the playbacks, smoking their enormous spliffs, saying, 'Great! Brilliant!'"

Sly Dunbar: "We got a call from Chris Blackwell that this French guy wants to work with us and didn't realise he was the guy who did Je T'Aime – it was very popular in Jamaica. We couldn't believe it. He didn't say why he wanted to do a reggae album."

Marianne Faithfull: "Serge was very interested in the spiritual content. He knew all about Rastafarianism; he knew about everything! I remember having long talks with him about it, as was the way in the '70s – the deepest meaning of Toots And The Maytals."

Sly: "When we met him here in Kingston we said, So we're going to make it polished? He said he wants it raw. It took less than a week. We laid the tracks and he was singing in French – we didn't know what he was singing about, but he loved everything we did."

Robbie Shakespeare: "To me Serge was not really a singer, he was more like a poet doing French poems on top of popular rhythms at the time."

Getty

drunk, and smoking – French cigarettes." Sly Dunbar

Sly: "He was constantly drinking in the studio, though he never looked drunk, and smoking – French cigarettes. I didn't see him smoke ganja."

Robbie: "He had an attaché case full of cigarettes – I think called Goulash, blue and white packet. I said, Serge, why do you smoke one after the other, not even two seconds pass in between? And he got vexed with me and told me a cigarette was more than his wife. A wife would get up and leave him and when she left him he would need something to cool down. His cigarette, he say, will never leave him."

Aux Armes Et Caetera, with its reggae version of the national anthem, was as provocative to the French as God Save The Queen was to middle England. Newspapers called it "repugnant", but the kids called it "cool" and the tour – using the Jamaican musicians – sold out. It was also plagued by bomb threats from the extreme right. In Strasbourg an old paratrooper presented the mayor with a petition to ban the show, warning if it went ahead they would "intervene physically… with all the strength at our disposal".

Robbie: "So Serge had a bodyguard with him, a big guy who weighed about 500lbs. I didn't sleep for days because whenever I fell asleep someone would call and say, 'Monsieur, you have to leave the hotel.'"

Birkin: "The Americans were furious to find themselves on the lawn at two in the morning with Serge, me and a lot of Rastas in our pyjamas."

Robbie: "Serge said, 'I want to play the song.' I said, I will play, but we are mercenaries – you have to sweeten our pockets! And everybody said, 'We will play if you do that.' But Serge said no more money, he will go and play. So he went over there by himself and did the national anthem solo."

Birkin: "Serge walked into the middle of the stage in front of all the paratroopers, the ones who had been kicking up all the fuss, and he sang the original Marseillaise, white-faced. The paratroopers didn't know what to do. They stood up, they sat down, they took their berets off. And at the end Serge put two fingers up, like 'fuck you', to cheering. By the time we got to Paris he was a hero." ➢

La belle et la bête: Serge with Jane Birkin in 1969.

The scandal behind *Aux Armes Et Caetera* typically delighted and upset Serge. "There's a duel between Gainsbourg and Gainsbarre; Gainsbarre likes to take digs at things," he said, 'Gainsbarre' being the name he came up with for his alcoholic alter ego. 'Gainsbarre' finally proved too much for Jane, who upped and left. But they stayed close and he continued to write for her – as well as for Deneuve and Adjani, and commercials for washing powder, soup, razorblades and lemonade. He wrote his first and only novella – Evguénie Sokolov – a quasi-autobiographical tale of art and farting written in the style of the late 19th century French decadents. He made another album with Sly And Robbie (song topics: God, Rastas, Jews, joints, poppers, his sperm and his daughter's dirty undies) and published an 'art book' of his photos of his new love, 21-year-old Bambou. He wrote her some songs as well. Then he found himself embroiled in another scandal after burning a 500F note on prime-time TV in protest at French taxes.

Lerichomme, after listening to a Southside Johnny album, reckoned Serge might like to make his next record in New York. He did.

Birkin: "Serge felt less intimidated by the American musicians because they knew him better than in England. He had met the Stones once – we were both in a French nightclub when he upset a glass of Peppermint Frappé onto Mick Jagger's trousers; just before Mick punched Serge on the nose I intervened, and thank God he recognised me from the old days in London – but the only English musicians who really knew Serge were the ones he worked with. He grumbled about it a bit, because he loved England so much and yet there was nothing of his on any English radio ever, except for Je T'Aime."

Billy Rush was put in charge of *Love On The Beat*, whose lyrics continued to break taboos: homosexuality (Serge appeared as a woman on the sleeve) and father-daughter sex. The video for Lemon Incest – Serge and daughter Charlotte nude on a circular bed – brought more scandal. But nothing compared with L'Affaire Whitney Houston.

It was one of those ubiquitous French live TV variety-cum-talk shows. Whitney sang her song then sat next to a particularly dissipated Serge, who was waiting to sing his. He mumbled in English, "I want to fuck her." Whitney screeched, "What did he say?" The white-faced host, leaping frantically from French to English, tried to smooth things over: "He wanted to offer you flowers."

"Don't translate for me," said Serge in French. "I said I wanted to fuck her."

Nicolas Godin: "I was watching it with all my family and all of a sudden he said that. It was amazing – very shocking and funny." The newspapers went wild. Serge defended himself, saying his life and his art had been "a search for truth via perversity".

A second album was made with Rush in New York, the jazz-rap-dance *You're Under Arrest*. Highlight Five Easy Pisseuses encompassed art (Picasso), cinema (Jack Nicholson), music and sex (Serge's erection), not to mention Franglais wordplay, within the space of just one song. Touring with him, Rush noticed how "tired and depressed" Serge looked, how "old" he seemed to have become in the three years since *Love On The Beat*.

Although his music and film output hadn't suffered, and he'd even fathered a son by Bambou, Serge's lifestyle seemed to be catching up with him. Friends and doctors suggested giving up drink and cigarettes; Serge said he sang better when his voice was ruined and wrote best while out of his gourd.

"Alcohol preserves fruit," he would say. "Smoking preserves meat." But not very well – he was hospitalised five times in '89: failed liver, heart attacks. Newspapers prepared their obituaries. But he continued to write – a film (Stan The Flasher), another Eurovision song (it came second), albums for Jane, Bambou and Vanessa Paradis. There was a new album scheduled for New Orleans with musicians including The Neville Brothers. But, work aside, Gainsbourg had become – by his standards, at least – a recluse. Though Bambou was still ostensibly his partner, he lived alone. Jane and her daughters would drop by with food; Catherine Deneuve would keep an eye on him; Bardot would phone to check up. He emerged for Bambou's birthday, then he went home without her. When she called him later and the phone wasn't answered, the paramedics broke in (he wouldn't let Bambou have a key, and Jane was away working in England). They found him dead in his bed.

"I kept thinking, Perhaps it isn't true, perhaps it's a nightmare. It's strange," says Birkin, "that the last thing he did was the remix of Requiem Pour Un Con, and the last album he wrote for me three months before he died was called *Amours Des Feintes* – which means love of pretending, but also love of the dead."

FOR SOMEONE SO ACCUSTOMED TO SPOTLIGHT and scandal, a cardiac arrest in his sleep seemed a remarkably prosaic exit. No under-age sleeping partner, no drunken vomit, no smoking mattress from a carelessly discarded Gitane. In death as in life, Serge Gainsbourg refused to conform. Which is one of the reasons why it's so tough to say in a sentence or two what his importance to French pop music was. There was no one else like him in France, no one to compare with him elsewhere. A bit of Elvis in his recognisability factor – though Gainsbourg was a far more public person and wrote his own songs. A bit of Bowie, maybe, in the way he changed his style – though rarely his look. As widely-covered and as musically literate as Burt Bacharach, he was also as provocative as Johnny Rotten, but without ever alienating his older audience.

> *"Serge upset a glass of Peppermint Frappé on Mick Jagger's trousers. I intervened before Mick punched him on the nose."*
>
> Jane Birkin

Gainsbourg was the first French pop musician to successfully use a song's words as part of its rhythm, something made difficult by the sound of French and its accent on the last part of the word. His lyrics coupled French high literature with American comic books, while his melodies demonstrated an innate understanding of classical, pop, chanson and jazz.

"He's so many things," says engineer Dominique Blanc-Francard, who remixed Serge's live shows at the Zenith and the Casino De Paris for DVDs. "A mutant, someone who keeps changing forms – jazz, pop, rock, sometimes all three, and more of his own invention.

"He had a technique of cutting the words in the middle and replacing them with a rhythm and accent that was English but with a meaning that was completely French. For him the sound of words was as important as the sense; that was completely new in France."

Birkin: "Since his death, *Cabbage Head* and *Melody Nelson* have all become gold records. He wrote some of the most beautiful French songs ever written. He would have been pleased [that these days] all these attractive young people love him. He'd have thought, 'Too bad for the old ones, they just didn't understand, but the young ones do' – and his greatest love was to be loved by young people.

"He once said, 'Songwriting is a minor art, but I do it for minors.' Serge kept something that most of us lose, which is being an eternal adolescent."

Sylvie Simmons is the author of the acclaimed Serge Gainsbourg – A Fistful Of Gitanes (Da Capo/Amazon).

Rex Features

Back to nature: The Creation (from left) Bob Garner, Kenny Pickett, Jack Jones, Eddie Phillips.

the dawn chorus

The Creation were the great lost '60s pop art group, making a racket as dark and powerful as The Who's while setting alight action paintings on-stage. Lois Wilson tracks down guitarist Eddie Phillips to talk pioneering feedback techniques, chaotic gigs, a stint on the buses and Boney M's cover of Painter Man. ➢

Courtesy Phil Smee

"I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT," EDDIE PHILLIPS rubs the back of his neck with embarrassment then looks at his feet. MOJO has just suggested that the 73-year-old is one of the most innovative guitarists to come out of the UK. "I mean, there are so many, Jimmy Page, Pete Townshend…" he says. And yet, there's a genuine case to be made for Phillips, who with freak-beat combo The Creation played a lead role on a series of pioneering late '60s pop recordings that screamed with feedback and dissonance and introduced the idea of playing the guitar with a violin bow, a technique later popularised, of course, by Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page.

Phillips, born in Leytonstone in 1942, honed his craft in skiffle band-turned-rock'n'rollers Nick Taylor And The Breakers and Bobby Lee And The Travellers, before joining The Mark Four,with whom he introduced feedback into the beat group vernacular. After several line-up changes, The Mark Four evolved into The Creation, and although Phillips was only in the group for a year, he shaped the sound of the psychedelic underground with his dynamic experimentation.

The group's first single, 1966's Shel Talmy-produced Making Time, frames excoriating vocals in crunching power chords and pounding drums, topped with Phillips' fiery violin-bowed guitar solo. The same year's Painter Man, meanwhile, set the template for pop art sonic experiment and, when played live, pushed the boundaries of auto-destructive stage craft into new realms with lead singer Kenny Pickett creating an action painting with spray paints and a canvas, before setting it alight.

After leaving the band in 1967, Phillips worked with PP Arnold, appearing in her live group and on the 1968 single, Angel Of The Morning, and the album *Kafunta* from the same year. Then, suffering burn-out, he left the music business to become a bus driver.

Phillips returned in 1976, reuniting with Creation producer Shel Talmy for the solo single Limbo Jimbo, then teamed up with former Creation singer Kenny Pickett to record as Kennedy Express three years later. In 1993, the pair re-formed The Creation, recorded a live album *Lay The Ghost* and the 1996 studio album *Power Surge*, but their comeback was curtailed when Pickett passed away in 1997. Since then, Eddie Phillips has led a reconfigured Creation line-up and recorded a 2011 solo album, *Woodstock Daze*.

"the hacksaw ended up taking chunks out of the guitar. it was a disaster. the violin bow was plan b."

What's the first music that made an impression on you?
I was a teenager in the '50s and that was a brilliant time to grow up in. When rock'n'roll broke, it really was a musical revolution. I heard Elvis's Heartbreak Hotel on the BBC and when I heard his voice, it made me sit up. It sounded underground, illicit. Then I saw Buddy Holly live and that changed everything.

Buddy Holly inspired you to play guitar?
Yes, I went with some school friends to his show at Walthamstow Granada and seeing him play that Fender Strat, that was something else. We had never seen a guitar like that, it even had a whammy bar, and the way he played and the sound he made, I couldn't help but get hooked. Seeing him set the course of my life. Me and my friend then made a guitar – we cut out the shape of Buddy's guitar, screwed a neck on it from another guitar, put on an electric pick-up and got an old amp. It was unplayable, but it looked great and we posed with it. Then I got a proper guitar and started a band. It was just me and my mates playing in our front rooms to start with, but we got a tea chest bass and started playing gigs. Over time, we got in a bass, then drums. We went from skiffle to rock'n'roll under the name of Nick Taylor And The Breakers and Bobby Lee And The Travellers – the same group but with a different singer.

What motivated you – money, fame, the experience of being creative?
I was never in a band because I thought I was going to do something great, that was never my intention. It was just for the love of playing music and having fun.

You got serious when you joined The Mark Four, though…
The Mark Four were a really good band. The Travellers and them shared a manager. When their guitarist decided to leave, our manager asked if I wanted to try out for them. The Travellers had run out of steam so I went along for an audition. Their bassist John Dalton, who later went on to join The Kinks, drove me to this pub in Homerton [East London] in his Ford V8 Pilot, and that's when I first met Kenny Pickett, who was singing with them, and Jack Jones, their drummer. There was immediate chemistry, we started playing some rock'n'roll covers and that was it. I joined The Mark Four right then. They wore matching silver suits on stage and, luckily, the guy I replaced left his behind in the van so I could wear his.

In 1964, The Mark Four issued their debut 45, a cover of Bill Hayley's Rock Around The Clock. It flopped, as did its follow-up, Marvin Gaye's Try It Baby. Then you bagged a residency at the Big Ben Club in Wilhelmshaven, Germany. Was that the equivalent of your 'Hamburg' period?
We went to Germany a rock'n'roll covers band and came back an R&B group who wrote their own material. It made us a really tight act. We played from 8pm to 3am, half an hour on stage then 15 minutes off, throughout the night. When you play like that you quickly run out of songs. So we started making them up as we went along. We played so much we had to share vocal duties. Kenny would sing until he lost his voice, then me until mine went, then Jack. While we were there we met other bands, like the Dave Davini Four. They were playing R&B with a Hammond organ, they seemed far more interesting, so we started doing Jimmy Reed, Bo Diddley, I started playing harmonica.

When did you start using feedback?
I discovered it by accident. I was trying to come up with something new to do on-stage, and I found I could make a note out of it. Then we were doing House Of The Rising Son at the Corn Exchange in Hertford and in place of the organ part I used feedback. I remember looking out on the audience and they looked totally bewildered. Then when we recorded our third single [1965's] Hurt Me If You Will, on the B-side, I'm Leaving, I used the feedback for the whole guitar break. I remember our roadie Bill Fowler telling me a band in West London was doing our act and that they were called The High Numbers [who later became The Who]. I just said, "So what?" ➤

:Courtesy Phil Smee

Take a bow: Eddie Phillips in 1966 pre-empting Jimmy Page.

Lights, camera, action painting! The Creation on Ready, Steady, Go!, September '66.

"it got to the end of the decade and i'd had enough. so i became a bus driver. but i was still playing sessions and had to change my shifts."

Then you attempted to play the guitar with a hacksaw.
I wanted to make a long sustain and play a note at the same time, so I used a hacksaw. I took the blade out and put a guitar string on it. We did a show – I can't remember where – but I ended up taking chunks out of my guitar with it. The audience was laughing. It was a disaster, so the violin bow was Plan B.

After a fourth single, Work All Day (Sleep All Night), in February 1966, The Mark Four hired future Genesis manager Tony Stratton-Smith, who changed their name to The Creation. Adding Merseybeats bassist Bob Garner to the line-up of Phillips, Pickett and Jones, the group donned matching outfits – military patterned purple shirts with black epaulets and trousers – then auditioned for The Who and Kinks producer Shel Talmy (see panel).

Did the meeting with Talmy inspire you to write more original material?
We auditioned at London's Regent Sound. Shel liked us and arranged a session. We just had to come up with a song, and that's how Making Time came about. Kenny and I always wrote the same way. I'd bash out some chords, hum where the words would be, then go see Kenny. We'd be done in an hour or two. We'd go to a studio, rehearse it with the band and then get it down with Shel. It was the same process with every single.

What inspired the pop art references in Painter Man?
We were surrounded by this buzz, this coming together of music and art and we wanted to capture that on record. I experimented more with the violin bow on this one and once Ken got those opening lines – "Went to college, studied art/To be an artist, make a start" – we knew we'd written a terrific song.

What role did Shel Talmy play?
Shel was great. He had the sound in his head he wanted at the end of each recording, and he knew the sound we wanted and he figured out how to get it. We recorded Making Time and Painter Man in IBC studios at Portland Place with [future Who/Stones producer] Glyn Johns as our engineer, and we just had to play the songs as if there was an audience in front of us, no overdubs.

Painter Man inspired Kenny Pickett's on-stage action painting, which took performances further into avant-garde territory. How did it happen?
We were supporting The Walker Brothers on a string of dates around the UK [in August '66]. We had just recorded Painter Man and wanted to make it the central focus of our live performance. We were in the van, travelling to Great Yarmouth, and we came up with the idea of Kenny creating some artwork in the instrumental break of the song. It was a Sunday afternoon so when we arrived in Great Yarmouth,

Courtesy Phil Smee, Getty

nearly everywhere was shut. But we found some wood, and our roadie Bill Fowler started making it into a 6ft-by-6ft frame in the car park. He also found an old decorating shop open and got some wallpaper to make the canvas.

The band – all in their purple and black finery – were bent down, bashing nails into it. No paint shops were open so we went to a garage and got some aerosol spray paints, and so Kenny probably became the first graffiti artist in the UK. We started extending the break. I'd be playing away and the violin bow would get wrecked, so I'd chuck it at the screen like an arrow, and it would get stuck in there. The aim was to create visual madness to illustrate the music. Then we got smoke effect powder from a joke shop and made a smoke screen around it, and then eventually Kenny started setting the canvas alight.

What do you remember of the infamous show at the Circus Krone in Munich in '66 when the fire brigade were called out?
It was chaos. We didn't realise we had to get written permission to set anything alight in Germany. We were playing in this permanent ring, there was carpet and sawdust on the ground, the canvas started burning and suddenly the floor caught fire. There was smoke billowing and flames everywhere – the crowd, all these young kids, they thought it was brilliant, they loved the rebelliousness of it.

But there soon changes afoot. Kenny Pickett quit in '67 and bassist Bob Garner became the lead vocalist ("Bob wasn't Kenny," admits Phillips, "but he was a good singer") and ex-Bird Kim Gardner was recruited to play bass. Less than a month later, the reconfigured Creation were supporting the Stones in Germany. "It was a huge thing in hindsight, but we took it in our stride," says Phillips.

It was this new line-up that played on the single How Does It Feel To Feel, a menacing rewrite of Aldous Huxley's drug novel The Doors Of Perception and arguably the group's most remarkable record. It took Bob Garner and Eddie Phillips a few minutes to write, but Garner's unsettling title refrain and Phillips' discombobulating feedback mirror the paranoid claustrophobia of a bad trip.

How Does It Feel To Feel was a moment of pure genius. What inspired it?
We did that at Pye studios in Marble Arch, and it was the noisiest session we ever did. It just sounded tremendous as we were getting it down. We did it live, of course, and what a racket! And that opening drumming by Jack [Jones]… it's been copied so many times. It's the basis of Queen's We Will Rock You for a start.

Was it disappointing that you were issuing such ambitious 45s, but never had an album in the UK at the time?
Yes it was. There was only *We Are Painterman* which came out around Europe [in '67] and that wasn't a proper album, just a collection of singles and some covers, Cool Jerk, Hey Joe, songs we did live. It didn't capture what we were in the studio, what we were capable of.

Did that play a part in your leaving the band?
In a way, but I was burned out from playing live – we'd not stopped – and the intensity of the music… I could never just go on stage and cruise along, I always had to go 150 per cent, whack it out all the time. It took its toll, mentally and physically. The strain of being on the road was affecting my marriage, which broke up. At the same time, the group was just staying on an even level, we weren't going down, but we weren't going up either. It was time to get out.

By the end of the year, though, you were back playing gigs as a member of PP Arnold's band.
Kenny was working with PP Arnold, driving her to gigs. They needed a bass player, I wasn't doing anything so Kenny asked me if I wanted to do it. But when it got to the end of the decade, I'd had enough. I thought, 'Why don't I just get a job where someone actually pays you?' I'd just met [partner] Ruth, who I've been with ever since.
I was really happy being with her, so I went off to be a bus driver.
I was still doing sessions for Shel. He sent me telegrams: "Ed, can you be at IBC studios at 2.30?" I'd go down to the phone box at the end of the road and say yes then change my shift on the buses. Crazy!

making time

Producer Shel Talmy on what made The Creation special.

"My friend, The Mark Four's manager Tony Stratton-Smith, took me to see them, and I was struck immediately by Eddie Phillips. It was obvious he had something really special, his playing was aggressive, he was really knocking it out and few bands were doing that then. They came and auditioned, and it was a no brainer. Alongside The Who and The Kinks they were one of the best bands I'd ever heard.

Eddie and Kenny Pickett were terrific songwriters – Making Time, Painter Man, How Does It Feel To Feel, these songs are very rare; commercial with great melodies and hooks, but inventive. They still cut through everything today with Eddie using feedback and then a violin bow to play the guitar, which no one had done before.

Why weren't they hits in the UK? You can never be sure, but they were really ahead of their time, and Eddie was central to that. He played guitar like no one else was playing it, he's probably the best unknown guitarist in rock. He should definitely be up there and celebrated alongside Jimi Hendrix. Him and Kenny were really smart. Kenny knew how to project an attitude and their live show was spectacular. They wore matching outfits, they had the action painting, they were the first to do that, to my knowledge, and they were really loud.

Just before they finally split in 1968, I'd made a deal with Ahmet Ertegun to sign The Creation with Eddie and Kenny to Atlantic. It's my biggest regret that I couldn't keep them together and that they never made it. They really deserved to be one of the major '60s bands."

Do you remember where you were when Boney M took their version of Painter Man to Number 10 in the UK in 1979?
Yes, sat in my front room watching Saturday night TV! They started performing it on the show I was watching. I had no idea they were going to cover the song and only became aware of it then. It was exciting to hear how they'd changed it into a disco song.

At that time you and Kenny Pickett were trading as the Kennedy Express.
Kenny and I were in the studio writing together under the name Kennedy Express. We did a couple of singles under that name, Little Lolita and Is There Life On Earth? Kenny and I had never been out of touch since The Creation, we were always chucking ideas at each other. That's how The Creation reformation came about in 1993. Kenny just called me up one day and said, "Shall we do it?" I had doubts, but I said I'd give it a go.

And how did it go?
We went into rehearsals for our comeback gig at London's Mean Fiddler. We'd not been together in a room since the '60s and after we'd all said hello, we struck up Making Time and within 15 minutes it was like we'd been transported back in time. Painter Man, How Does It Feel To Feel, it came easy and the gig was good. I was happy.

Was it the same with 1996's *Power Surge*?
No, Kenny and Jack were keen to jump right in, I was more reluctant. It didn't help that it was done a song here, a song there, in different studios. There was that fear it could ruin our legacy, tarnish the past. It didn't, though, and it was good Kenny got to do it before he passed away in '97.

And you carried on with The Creation after.
We played a couple of shows, then I lost touch with Jack and Bob so I got in [vocalist] Simon Turle. He encouraged me to make a solo album, *Woodstock Daze*. I'm following that up now. I've got so many songs, the only problem is editing them down. Ⓜ

Special thanks to John Reed.

The Surreal

In 1966, The Mothers Of Invention's aptly deranged debut album, *Freak Out!*, made visionary and intolerant of the herd mentality, Zappa was no friend of the hippies –

Alamy

People

their leader Frank Zappa a star of the counterculture. But confrontational, or his bandmates, for that matter. Mark Paytress unfolds the Mothers' mad tale. ➢

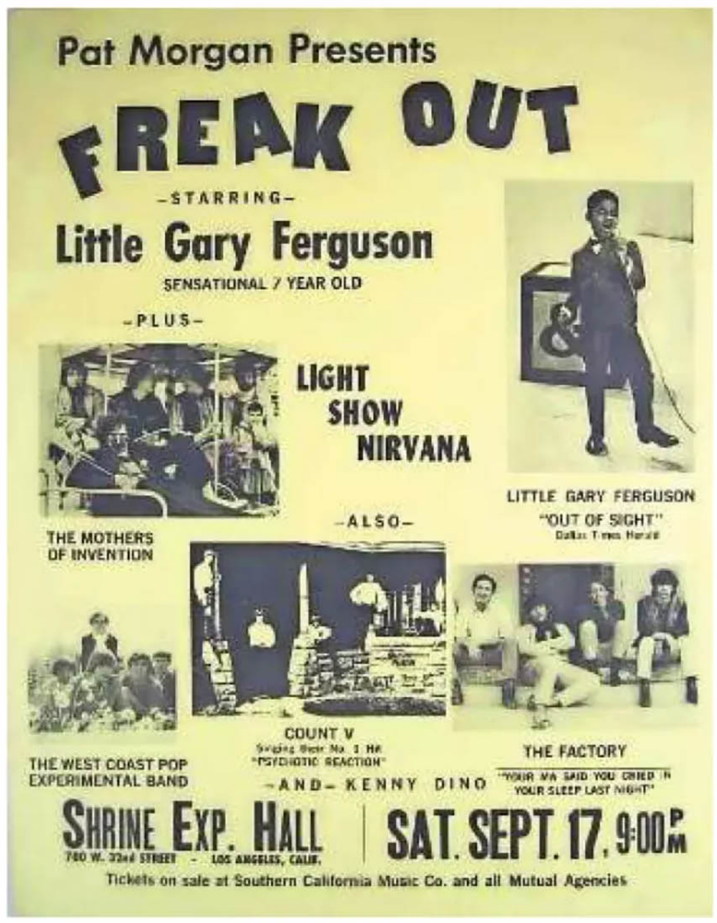
THE SUMMER OF LOVE, 1967: THEY MIGHT have been wearing flowers in their hair in San Francisco, but in Greenwich Village there was hate in the air. A US Marine had been murdered and the word on the street was that his buddies were in the area looking for longhairs. So when a trio of 'Devil Dogs' swaggered up to the stage of the Garrick Theatre, where The Mothers Of Invention – eight of the most unkempt looking men in the country – were creating what the smart papers were calling 'rock theatre', something was always going to happen. "The audience couldn't believe that they were on-stage with us," recalled Frank Zappa. "United States Marines in full dress uniform with... the Mothers!" The three young men lunged for the microphone and started screaming, "Kill! Kill! Kill!" The audience laughed. The Mothers went into some electronic music, and the Marines sat down next to the band. During the intermission, Zappa sent out for a large female doll. "During one of our hot numbers, I gave [the Marines] instructions to mutilate the doll, just like they're trained to do back at the camp," Zappa explained. "And they just ripped the piss out of this doll. They stomped on it, they mangled it, they messed the eyes up. They really did a good job on it." The music faded, the lights went down, and Zappa held the doll parts up for inspection. "One guy in the front row, a negro cat just back from Vietnam, was crying," he told the author and historian Frank Kofsky weeks later. "I ended the show there."

If there was one thing that infuriated the famously grouchy Zappa, it was unquestioned obedience. Angry about the war in Vietnam, and ruthless in ridiculing Middle America, Zappa and the original Mothers seemed firmly aligned to youth's conscious, progressive wing. But they weren't. Their ritual humiliation of hippies and pie-in-the-sky Love Generation thinkers would have done Governor of California Ronald Reagan proud. The fact that these constituted a large chunk of the band's potential audience only boosted the group's contrary, taboo-smashing reputation.

Zappa's genius was to successfully take this quarrelsome aesthetic into the studio. Between 1966 and 1969, The Mothers Of Invention made music that sounded like little else, then or now. An unprecedented pick'n'mix of doo-wop, dada, free jazz, garage rock and psychedelia, it was taken further into uncharted territory by Zappa's out-there approach to recording.

The story begins in April 1965, when studio prodigy and aspiring composer Frank Zappa was invited by his old pal Ray Collins to join a Pomona-based combo called The Soul Giants. The 24-year-old soon after made the band an offer they found impossible to refuse: "If you play my music, I will make you rich and famous."

Within weeks, the group – founder members drummer Jimmy Carl Black and bassist Roy Estrada, with guitarist Zappa and frontman Collins – lost their regular gig at the Broadside club, where they'd been knocking out R&B and soul covers. But at least by then they had a new name, The Mothers, acquired on Mother's Day.



Roy Estrada has claimed that it was he, not Zappa, who first suggested it, with Frank initially rejecting the name on the grounds that an abbreviation of motherfuckers "will never be accepted". Either way, Zappa convinced the group that it was better to be unemployed, penniless and starving in Hollywood than in the far eastern suburbs of Los Angeles County.

Zappa's can-do approach served him well, in his fast-track rise to head Mother and also in finding a kindred spirit to manage the group. Herb Cohen, an LA folk scene manager/promoter since the late '50s, was well-connected and a plain-speaking negotiator, and 'Herbie' and Frank got along famously. Cohen's arrival in August gave the Mothers an entrance into LA's thriving club scene. A month-long residency at West Hollywood's The Action club in October was soon followed by stints at Sunset Strip hotspots the Whisky A Go-Go and the Trip.

One night in December 1965, Cohen took MGM's new A&R man Tom Wilson to catch The Mothers at the Whisky. Posterity has it that Wilson only stayed long enough to hear the ringing, stinging, anguished R&B of Trouble Every Day. Written weeks earlier as a response to the riots in Watts, a predominantly black neighbourhood in South Central LA, it was the closest Frank ever came to delivering a conventional protest song.

Mostly, though, The Mothers' set baffled. One minute, they'd be singing a doo-wop ballad with smiles on their faces, the next, a gritty R&B number would start out like The Rolling Stones before collapsing into a kazoo-driven cacophony.

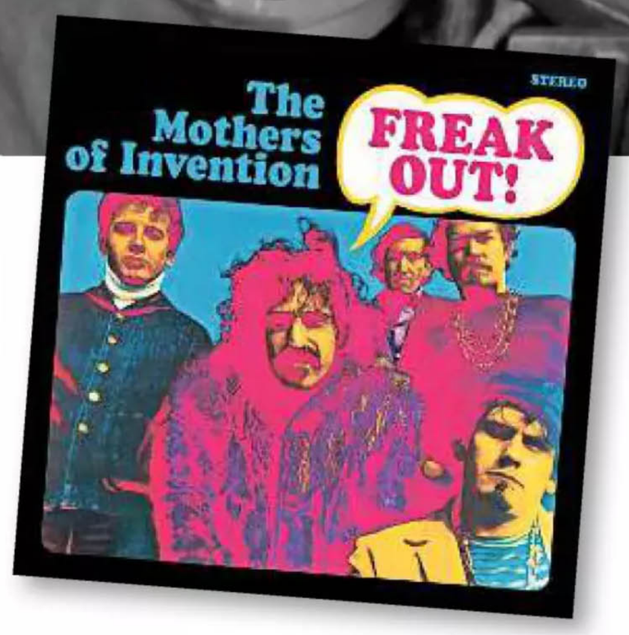
Most unsettling were the regular lapses into theatrical, spoken-word material such as It Can't Happen Here, a dada-inspired a cappella piece and a guaranteed room-clearer for those who'd come to the Strip expecting the usual Byrds-inspired folk-rock fare.

It wasn't only the Whisky audience – "a bunch of drunk people in go-go boots", as Zappa dubbed them – that found the increasingly freeform and far-out Mothers uncomfortable. "I wanted to make beautiful music," remembered Ray Collins. "I was raised on Johnny Mathis and Nat 'King' Cole."

March 1966 was the pivotal month. Thanks to Tom Wilson's skewed comprehension of the band, The Mothers signed a three-album deal with MGM-Verve on March 1. Days later, Zappa sufficiently impressed his producer to pay for a 17-piece orchestra and make their debut album a two-disc record. The result was *Freak Out!*, which ranged in style from pastiche (some of disc one) to unprecedented (most of disc two).

From its confrontational title to the 12-minute musical 'freak out' that closed the set, nothing on *Freak Out!* suggested normality. The cover shot, taken on Malibu Beach and solarised into a shape-shifting image, smacked of contempt. In contrast to The Byrds' bowl cuts and The Mamas And The Papas' California grins, the Mothers' aged, bearded fizzogs were an affront to pop teen sensibilities. The focal point, inevitably, was Zappa wrapped in a woman's fur coat.

Le freak, c'est freaky: at the Whisky A Go-Go, October 1966.



Only polo-neck wearing Elliot Ingber – later Winged Eel Fingerling with Captain Beefheart's Magic Band – looked dressed for the call from Ed Sullivan that never came.

IT WAS THE MOTHERS' GOOD FORTUNE THAT producer Tom Wilson, who'd overseen the electrification of both Bob Dylan and Simon & Garfunkel's work for Columbia, was willing to fight their corner. At TTG Studios off Sunset Strip, the group began their first session on March 9. The first song, Any Way The Wind Blows, was an upbeat pop confection. For the second number, Hungry Freaks, Daddy, the group did bad things to the Stones' Satisfaction riff, layering it with numbskull vocals and a kazoo making raspberries. The song celebrated the "rising tide" of draft-dodging hungry freaks, "the left behinds of The Great Society", apostates opposed to the US's "supermarket dream". Wilson reached for his phone, called New York, and demanded more money.

Getty

Over the course of three days, capped by a night session that stretched into the early hours of March 12, things got progressively more ambitious and weirder. Winding up the first day, Zappa reeled off a remarkable, teeth-baring guitar break during Trouble Every Day. Even more astonishing was his rap-style vocal. "I'm not black but there's a whole lots of times I wished I could say I'm not white," he declared. The evening concluded with Motherly Love, bubblegum pop that advertised the group's prowess with groupies.

On the second day, numerous session musicians, including ace Wrecking Crew bassist Carol Kaye and large woodwind and cello sections, were called in. ➢

You're probably wondering why I'm here: Zappa and Ray Collins at the Whisky.

After an overdub session on March 11, The Mothers reconvened at 2am the following morning with several dozen assorted in-crowders from LA's underground scene in tow. Lurking among them were future Monty Python man Terry Gilliam, Turtles vocalist Howard Kaylan and soon-to-be Manson Family killer Bobby Beausoleil. The resulting 'freak out', which formed the album's second disc, did much to cement the group's reputation.

The session began with Help, I'm A Rock, a melee of drone-beat and gibberish voices (led by Kim Fowley) hung on an ominous bass riff. Passages of heavy breathing and exotica percussion gave way to a bizarre vocal piece built around the phrase It Can't Happen Here (as in "No freaks for us, it can't happen here!"). But the concluding The Return Of The Son Of Monster Magnet, a sidelong mosaic of stoned raps, monkey calls and "America's wonderful!" declarations set to a bored, baggy beat, confirmed that the freaks were on the march.

"These Mothers is crazy," wrote Zappa, masquerading as the band's supergroupie Suzy Creamcheese on the back cover of *Freak Out!*, released in the US on June 27, 1966. "You can tell by their clothes. One guy wears beads and they all smell bad." And so the anti-endorsement continues, weaving a web of intrigue around "the guy in the fur coat" and his all-crazy, all-dancing friends, before signing off with a threat of potential corruption. "None of the kids at my school like these Mothers," warns 'Suzy', "'specially since my teacher told us what the words to their songs meant."

This sidelong mosaic of stoned raps and monkey calls confirmed that the freaks were on the march.

In truth, it was The Mothers' own reputation that had been sullied by outside influence. Wary at the suggested implications of the group's name, MGM demanded a change. Inadvertently, it did them a huge favour: The Mothers became The Mothers Of Invention; invention by name, inventive by nature.

ZAPPA WAS IN THE PLAYGROUND AND BEGINNING to show off. But he wasn't the only one. In mid-1966, a trio of blues and jazz-trained virtuosos in London came together as The Cream. Soon afterwards, The Beatles announced they'd no longer be touring so they could concentrate on recorded work. In LA, Brian Wilson was hailed as "one of the greatest innovators" by Leonard Bernstein. In San Francisco, a fast-growing psychedelic music scene was moving pop's epicentre away from London and LA.

Zappa, a perfectionist with a work ethic that would soon infuriate his fellow Mothers almost as much as his firm anti-drug stance, felt little competition at the creative level. But just as his two-disc paean to freaks, freaking out and – as the sleeve boldly put it – "free expression" was being eclipsed by the hyped-up hippies from Haight-Ashbury, Zappa was gifted with a delicious new target for his stinging social criticism.

Back in the West Coast clubs that summer, The Mothers Of Invention continued to baffle the locals. The LA Times described them as "a talented but warped quintet… most of the tunes are very experimental and hard on the eardrums and the patience", and Zappa loved it. But he was niggled by Ralph J. Gleason's view, from sniffy San Francisco, that the Mothers were "Hollywood hippies full of contrivance, tricks and packaging, a Sunset Boulevard version of The Fugs". Over the next two years, as Zappa became one of the most articulate voices from the emerging rock culture, his interviews were filled with devastating – and, as it turned out, mostly accurate – swipes at hippy hypocrisy and the bankrupt philosophy of Flower Power.

Getty

Gail Sloatman, PA to Whisky A Go-Go owner Elmer Valentine, first met Frank Zappa at LA airport in summer 1966. He was, Barry Miles recalls her saying in his Zappa biography, "one of the grubbiest creatures she'd ever seen", with a "compelling glare" and "major magnetic charm". She, in turn, was "a fascinating little vixen" according to Zappa, who would marry her the following year and remain with her until his death. Almost immediately, Gail joined Frank in the Laurel Canyon house he shared with their mutual pal Pamela Zarubica and Jim 'Motorhead' Sherwood, Zappa's friend since high school and latterly a Mothers roadie.

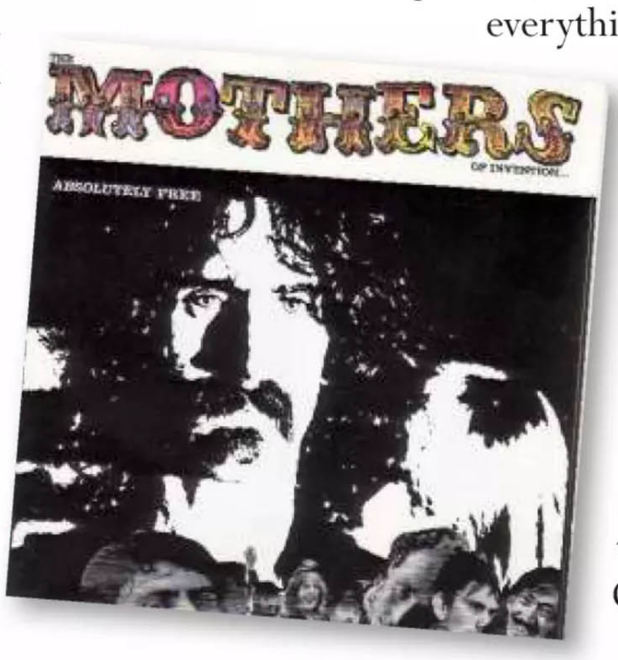
Gail's arrival created further distance between Zappa and his fellow Mothers, though it merely hastened a process set in motion the day Frank first insisted the group perform his music. By now, Zappa liked to conduct interviews alone and stay in separate hotels from the rest of the band. One final and oddly public murmur of discontent was played out on the pages of the underground's Los Angeles Free Press in the summer of 1966.

Enraged by the fashion for freakiness, and fearing that his 'freak' brand was being misrepresented and undermined, Zappa (under the Suzy Creamcheese alias) wrote a rant that basically amounted to a declaration that "Looking and acting eccentric IS NOT ENOUGH". The correspondence intensified during October. Zappa complained that the paper had incorrectly identified someone else as a Mother and that the 'Freak Out' idea was now being hijacked.

He was back in the next issue, railing against "IMPOSTERS who would USURP & CORRUPT a number of CONCEPTS & TECHNIQUES which we DEVELOPED". Clearly embarrassed by this paranoid, delusional display, lead vocalist Ray Collins wrote to say that the opinions stated were Zappa's alone and did not reflect the viewpoint of the other Mothers. No such threat to Zappa's presidential status was ever made in public again.

Like The Fugs, The Mothers were funny, satirical and freakish. Unlike their so-called New York counterparts, they were fronted by a visionary who regarded himself as a composer and was obsessed with the possibilities of recorded sound. Over the course of four days in December 1966, Zappa and his newly enlarged eight-piece "tonal ensemble" created the basis for two extraordinary sound collages, one for each side of *Absolutely Free*.

The album was light years ahead of both The Beatles' *Revolver* and The Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*; only the inscrutable complexity and rich textures of The Beach Boys' autumn hit, Good Vibrations, could compare. But, born of Zappa's gnarly nature and recorded in the immediate aftermath of the teenage riots on Sunset Strip, *Absolutely Free* was the antithesis of Brian Wilson's ode to sun-kissed, windswept bliss. With multiple time-signature changes on the album's two centrepieces (Call Any Vegetable and The Duke Of Prunes), nods to everything from Holst's *The Planets* to Dixieland jazz, creepy spoken-word skits and extraordinary break-outs into progressive and jazz-rock (genres yet to be named), *Absolutely Free* more than lived up to its title.



Zappa fought MGM-Verve all the way in his attempt to stave off censorship of the lyric libretto (he lost), delaying the album by several months. When it eventually hit the shelves in June 1967, *Absolutely Free* was inevitably upstaged by *Sgt. Pepper*. Zappa didn't seem particularly bothered. Having just signed a deal with Capitol as a solo artist, he'd written a ballet for ➢

➤ a 40-piece orchestra in 11 days during February, and recorded it over three days in March. The only other Mother involved was sax player Bunk Gardner, one of two classically trained players (the other was jazz-based keyboard man Don Preston), who'd bolstered the line-up the previous autumn. And there was more…

IN AN EARLY INDICATION OF THE REVOLVING DOOR policy that became a feature of Zappa's career, *Freak Out!* guitarist Elliot Ingber had been sacked by the time the album appeared, replaced by Jim Fielder, who in turn was gone by early 1967. But such was Zappa's musical ambition that he couldn't resist adding to the line-up. A second drummer, Billy Mundi, had joined prior to the *Absolutely Free* sessions. Before The Mothers recorded their third LP, Mozart-loving, sax-wielding multi-instrumentalist Ian Underwood asked to join, while Motorhead Sherwood graduated to being a full-time baritone sax player and occasional percussionist. Shortly after the sessions, in December 1967, Mundi was replaced by another conservatory muso, Art Tripp.

Rigorously rehearsed, but poorly paid and forever shedding and gaining members, the band that hit New York in March 1967 and remained there for the next six months thrived on confrontation. To Zappa, it was a form of method acting, integral to the music. "It is a collection of opposites," he said. "Our music exists because we jam things that don't belong together. In other words, we attempt to do the impossible and demonstrate that it can be done."

When The Mothers first played NYC, late in 1966, Robert Shelton in the New York Times regarded Zappa as "a cultural revolutionary bent on overthrowing every rule in the music book". British critic Nik Cohn, writing in Queen magazine, disagreed. "Tired and old-hat," he groaned, a reference perhaps to the occasional rock'n'roll (Blue Suede Shoes) or doo-wop (Gee) cover that would pepper their sets. But when the Mothers returned at Easter, to begin their Garrick residency, there were queues around the block.

Incredibly, The Mothers were able to transpose their cut-and-paste compositional style from studio to stage. One new piece, King Kong, epitomised the breakthrough. Consisting of a series of what Zappa called "building blocks", each identifiable by a hand signal, the piece would unfold depending on the direction of his hand at any given time. As the incident with the Marines and the doll revealed, Zappa's desire to provoke the audience – who he'd often greet with a sardonic "Hello, pigs" – gave an air of menace to performances. The overriding tone, though, was sexual and scatological. Women who found themselves on stage were likely to be confronted by phallic vegetables. There was also the infamous stuffed giraffe with a hose attached, which, when rubbed by Ray Collins' frog-shaped glove hand, would spurt whipped cream over the audience.

It was The Mothers' perceived love of ugliness and outrage that the British press picked up on when the band flew in for a prestigious performance at the Albert Hall in September. "The appearance of our group borders on the grotesque," said Zappa proudly. When Melody Maker stuck a photo of him on their cover, his hair in bunches, wearing stockings under a mini-skirt, the following week's letters page burned with rage. Even fellow longhairs didn't know what to make of him. Having railed at hippies and "the love bullshit" for months, Zappa was regarded more as a libertarian or anarchist than a hippy.

Frank's sober assessment of the counterculture, given to readers of International Times, certainly made uncomfortable reading. "Most of the people that are supposedly a part of the underground now are very cowardly… and dumb," he claimed. "They're in it because they didn't want to do something else. They're too lazy to do anything else. It's all so superficial, man… And the kids that are in the supposed underground don't have anything to believe in. And most of them are tripping out on their shoelaces and the wallpaper and 'cosmic consciousness'."

Zappa's most brilliant and sustained assault on Summer of Love 'phoniness' was pieced together, mosaic-like, during August and September 1967, as the Garrick residency drew to a close. Conceived as the anti-*Sgt. Pepper*, from the vegetable-strewn cover parody right down to that cranky final note and fade, *We're Only In It For The Money* relentlessly pursued an anti-hippy theme (Who Needs The Peace Corps?, Flower Punk), interspersed by the usual digs at the elder generation (Mom And Dad). The underlying target, as always, was what Zappa called "stupidity". The punchline to What's The Ugliest Part Of Your Body? was, inevitably, "your mind". Sardonic, satirical, even psychedelic in its mind-boggling studio acrobatics, *We're Only In It For The Money* is also a landmark in 20th century (un) popular music.

"We jam things that don't belong together. We attempt the impossible and prove it can be done."

Despite the Mothers' incredible musical strides, it was never enough for Frank Zappa. By the time the much delayed *We're Only In It For The Money* (March 1968) and *Lumpy Gravy* (May) appeared, he and Herbie had formed the Bizarre label and management company with a view to creating a roster of Frank-endorsed freak acts. Regular visitors to Tom Mix's old log cabin in Laurel Canyon, where Zappa now lived with his wife and daughter Moon, were supergroupies The GTOs, self-styled 'worst band in the world' Alice Cooper and, right out of the mental institution, Wild Man Fischer.

Also re-entering the picture was Zappa's old High School mucker Don Vliet, now going out as psychedelic bluesman Captain Beefheart. The following spring, Zappa produced Beefheart's superlative *Trout Mask Replica*; it was as meticulously crafted as any Mothers recording but raw and direct with no hint of Zappa's studio collage approach.

Budding entrepreneur, talent scout, rock spokesman and rampant musical eclectic: Zappa was running riot. In June 1968, Newsweek declared him second only to John Lennon as pop's "leading creative talent". Most ex-Mothers recall Zappa as a force of nature and a musical ➤

Getty

Home on the strange: Gail and Frank with a sledge and a colander.

genius, though few shirk from recounting the sacrifice required in the creation of what Jimmy Carl Black has described as "the best band in the world". The drummer has spoken of a "doctor's note" culture that prevailed in the world of the full-time Mother, while Bunk Gardner has referred to Zappa's "huge ego" and "workaholic" state of mind. Zappa made no apologies, as the inclusion of Jimmy Carl Black's semi-serious "This fucking band's starving!" quip on 1969's *Uncle Meat* attests.

IN SCHOLARLY CIRCLES, THE fashionable notion is that David Bowie invented post-modern pop when he masqueraded as rock'n'roll hybrid Ziggy Stardust in 1972. Less spectacularly, but no less knowing, was The Mothers Of Invention's *Cruising With Ruben & The Jets* in 1968. While lightly dismissed for looking backwards to the "greasy rock'n'roll" of Zappa's teenage years, *Cruising With Ruben & The Jets* anticipated the 'heritage rock' that's now come to dominate the music industry. That doesn't necessarily make it great, but it does confirm Zappa's continued willingness to fly in the face of orthodoxy.

In 1969, ever the misanthrope, Zappa claimed, "I got tired of playing for people who clap for the wrong reasons."

Cruising With Ruben & The Jets proved to be the swansong for Ray Collins who, after quitting so often that it became, he said, "a running joke", left for good in early summer 1968. Years later, Collins complained there was "too much making fun of stuff". With Frank working on the 'Electric Chamber Music' that emerged in April 1969 as the 2-LP set *Uncle Meat*, perhaps Zappa thought so too. Certainly, by the time he got round to recording his first post-Mothers album, *Hot Rats* in summer 1969, not a snork, a falsetto voice or a booger joke was heard on the record.

Nappy valley: with baby Moon Unit in Laurel Canyon, February 1968.

By 1969, The Mothers Of Invention – now an eight- and sometimes nine-piece including guitarist and future Little Feat frontman Lowell George – had, in Zappa's words, "been grinding it out on the road" for three years. Frank had moved again, to a $100,000 house in Woodrow Wilson Drive, with a studio in the basement and a pool in the grounds. The rest of the band were scattered in less salubrious dwellings down in the valley.

Resentments grew on both sides. The Mothers had become totally dependent on Zappa who, as composer, spokesman and now label boss, had grown more detached from the band. He was the one with the bit between his teeth, and he became increasingly suspicious that various band members weren't taking the job seriously enough. Ever the misanthrope, Zappa also claimed, "I got tired of playing for people who clap for the wrong reasons." One ex-Mother later claimed that Zappa's growing estrangement was partly because the band were getting laid a lot more frequently on the road and that he, as a good husband, was not.

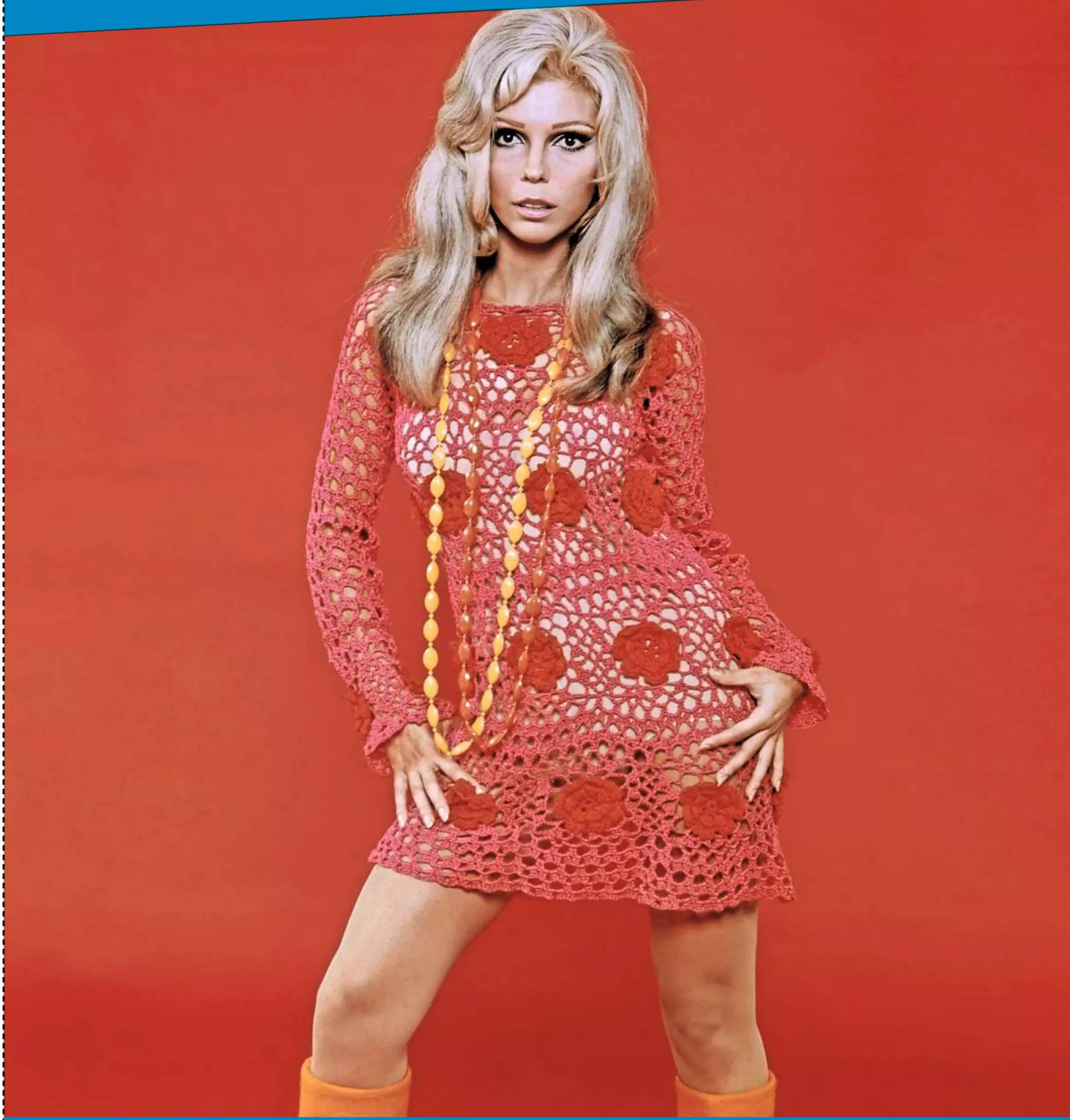
On August 18, 1969, The original Mothers of Invention played their last gig, in Montreal, Canada. Shortly afterwards, Zappa fired them in an awkward phone call to Jimmy Carl Black. Just a few days later, on September 5, 1969, Frank's second child was born. He named the boy, his first son, Ian Donald Calvin Euclid Zappa, in honour of Underwood, Preston, sleeve designer Cal Schenkel and Sherwood, after officials at the hospital refused to register him under Zappa's chosen name, Dweezil.

Over 15 years later, several of the ex-Mothers were still feeling aggrieved and took Zappa to court over non-payment of royalties. The matter was settled out of court. Funny man, Frank. Ⓜ

Getty

PIN-UPS

GROOVY PEOPLE BEING GROOVY!



Includes THE WALKER BROTHERS | JULIE DRISCOLL
RAY CHARLES | ? AND THE MYSTERIANS
SANDY DENNY | BOOKER T. AND THE MG'S | MARVIN GAYE
THE BEACH BOYS | NANCY SINATRA | THE SHANGRI-LAS

RAY CHARLES

THE SHANGRI-LAS

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JULIE DRISCOLL

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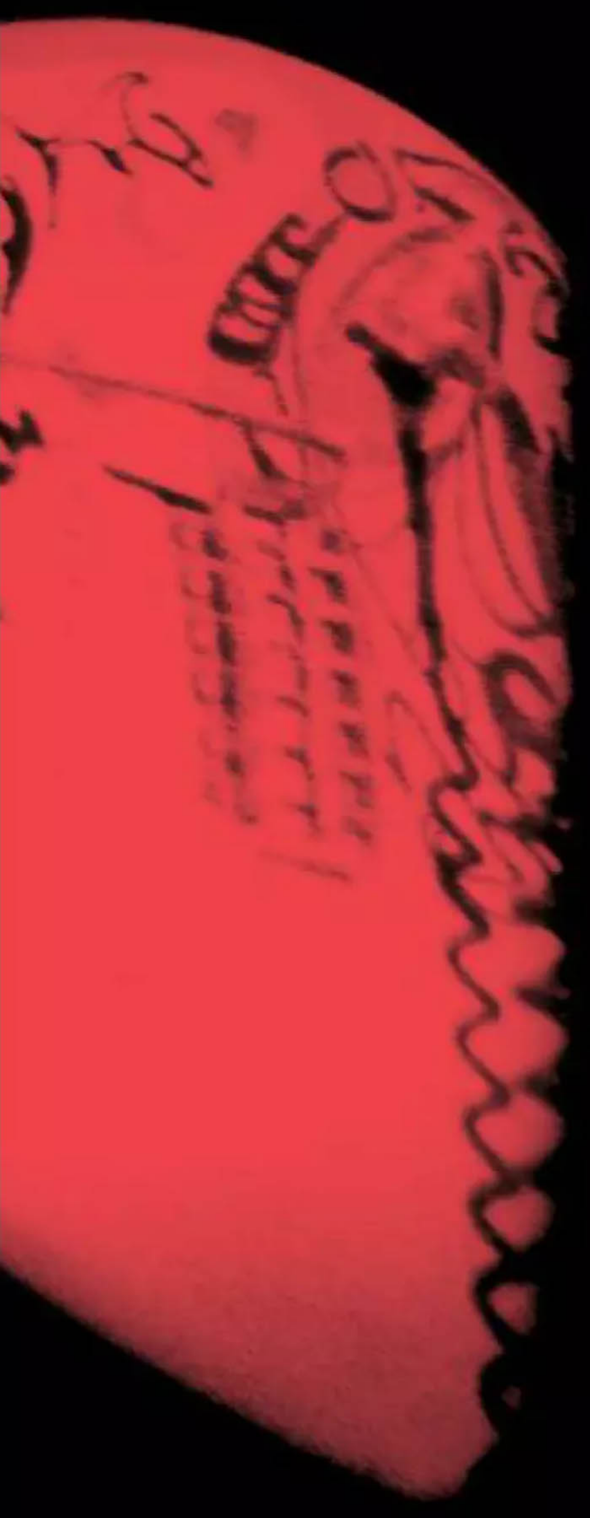
BOOKER T. AND THE MG'S

NANCY SINATRA

Alamy (2), Getty (6), Rex (3)

ASTRAL WEEKS



Fifty years ago, an unknown musician named Jimi Hendrix landed at London International airport with just a Stratocaster and one change of clothing. Nine months later, he was the most famous guitar player on the planet. In our 24-page bonanza, Caesar Glebbeek and Paul Trynka trace Jimi's vertiginous rise to stardom, beginning overleaf with his momentous meeting with model Linda Keith in New York in summer 1966, and then on p.82 with a day-to-day diary from his arrival in Britain to his flight home for the epochal 1967 Monterey Festival.

Escape From New York

Just months before Hendrix flew to London, he arrived in New York City unsure how to make the giant leap to stardom. Then he met model Linda Keith, was given Keith Richards' guitar and everything changed. In a rare interview, Linda tells Paul Trynka about her transformative friendship with the young guitarist.

Swinging: modish Linda.

ALTHOUGH LONDON was supposedly the most 'swinging' of cities in 1966, I loved New York. There I could hear more black music, which was my passion. Keith Richards was my boyfriend and I arrived in the city with him in late May for the Stones' US tour. I didn't go on the road with them, I stayed since I had friends there.

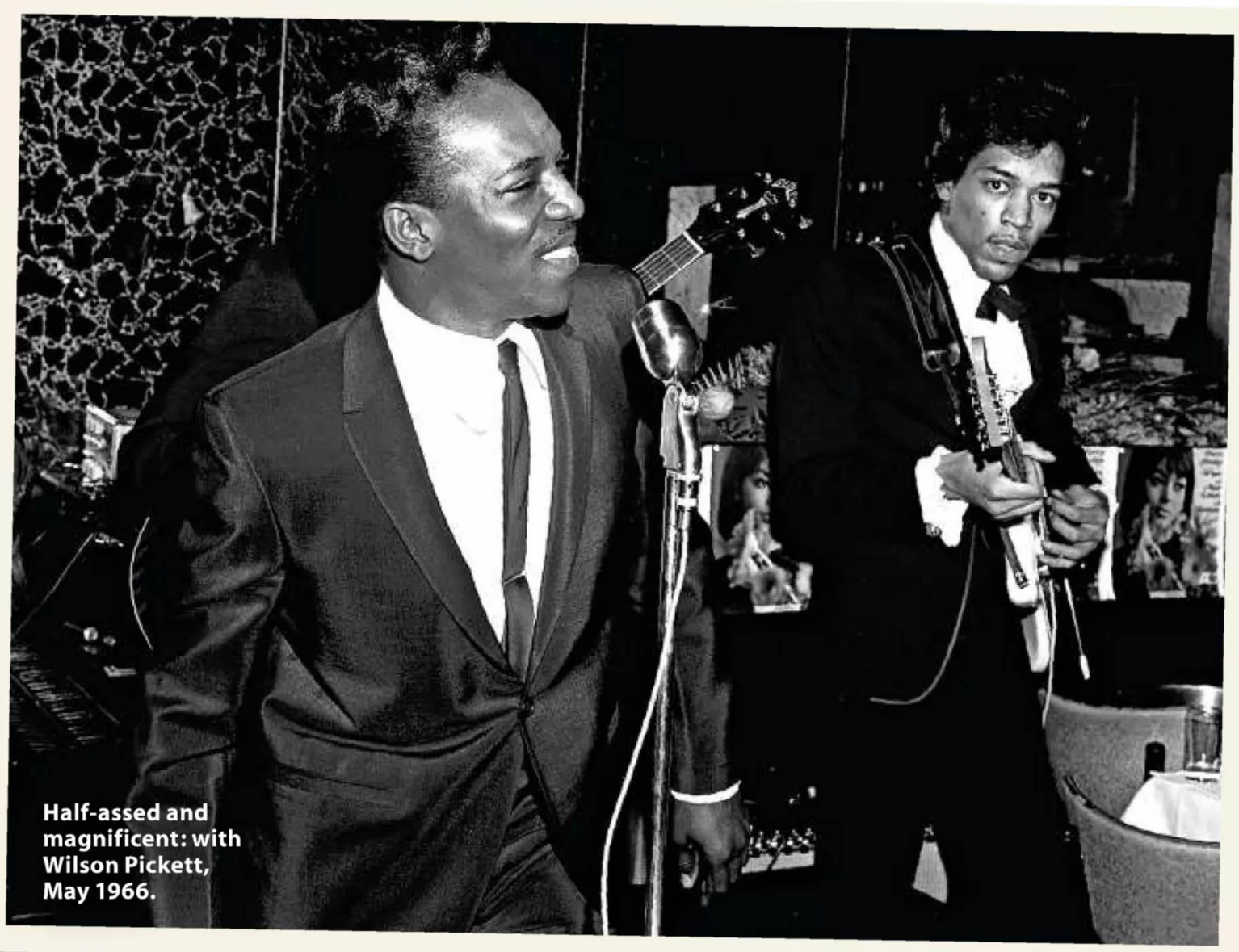
I hadn't heard of Jimi Hendrix – I came across him purely by chance. I was floored the moment I set eyes on him playing. It was at the Cheetah Club in Midtown. If my recollection is correct, it was a huge venue with a scant handful of an audience, none of whom took the slightest notice of the band, Curtis Knight And The Squires. I saw this lanky, relaxed guitar player with an air of boredom, playing blistering licks and solos with ease. It was a half-assed performance, but I thought he was magnificent. I had to meet him.

I knew the music scene well at this time, but was jaded and slightly bored with it all. When Jimi came along, I was motivated to see him become successful and give the scene a shot of adrenalin. Not only was he clearly a superb musician, he was so innovative. His ideas were original and his playing helped the electric guitar evolve to another level.

When we met, he told me he was living with his Aunty Fayne in Harlem. It turned out this aunt was in fact his girlfriend. He seemed to keep his Harlem life and downtown life very separate. He had another girlfriend in Manhattan where he stayed in the Lenox Hotel on 44th Street – a ratty place. But apart from a rare occasion when he went up to Harlem without me, he and I were joined at the hip for that summer in the Village.

Café Wha? was a subterranean coffee bar, no alcohol, with live music and poetry readings. Jimi played there in the afternoons on a bare stage to an audience of hippies, beatniks and tourists ogling the locals. It was owned by a chap called Manny [Roth] who blew hot and cold. Some days he was hugely friendly and paid Jimi and was quite affectionate. But usually he was rather hard and cold and would only let Jimi have the tips from the basket handed round during the set. There were tables and chairs on the floor in front of the stage and a raised area at the back with more seats and tables. On the occasions that Jimi played an evening set the venue took on a slightly more urbane ambience, but basically it was a cruddy basement with condensation running down the walls and a slightly rotten smell.

At Café Wha?, Jimi was playing the bones of some of the songs that were released on *Are You Experienced*. When the album came out I had an intense déjà vu. Foxy Lady featured, as did Red House, and then, of course, he had rearranged Hey Joe within hours of hearing it and was playing it that afternoon. Some later tracks also resonated with me from his Café Wha? sets or



Half-assed and magnificent: with Wilson Pickett, May 1966.

just from hanging around the apartment on 59th & Third (it belonged to a friend of mine – Jimi called it the Red House). He played a lot of blues and Dylan on a beat-up old acoustic guitar.

Jimi was desperate to be successful but didn't know how to go about it. I didn't know either – but I did know people who did. My first thought was to turn Keith on to him but he was touring, so I set about getting Andrew Oldham down to see Jimi. He passed, he says, because I was involved and he didn't want to anger Keith – but I could see Jimi through Andrew's eyes and saw a very unpolished, insecure performer. I also queered the pitch for the showcase I set up for my pal Seymour Stein because during his set Jimi trashed a guitar of Keith's which I had surreptitiously lent him – this caused a huge argument between the two of us, and Seymour wanted no part of it.

I didn't know Chas Chandler before I was introduced to him outside a club in Manhattan. We got talking and he mentioned that he was moving into management – I jumped on the idea of getting him down to Café Wha? the next afternoon. It didn't occur to me that Jimi would or should come to the UK. As it turned out it was a brilliant plan.

"During his set Jimi trashed a guitar of Keith's that I had lent him. It caused a huge row between us."

Jimi was insecure about a lot of things – apart from his guitar playing, in which he was supremely confident. He had huge mood swings that lasted days and I suspect today he would be diagnosed with bipolar. I was the same and therefore knew how to handle these periods, but that summer we were both in manic phases and we complemented each other – which I think was instrumental in achieving so much together.

On the day Jimi arrived in London, we had a huge argument. I honestly thought I would never speak to him again. Of course, that blew over and we continued a spasmodic relationship over the next few years, usually when he was sad and despondent. I last saw him about three weeks before he died, the night before he left London for the Isle Of Wight. He was depressed and clearly wanted me to jumpstart a new phase in his life. I never saw him again.

He was surrounded by people who used him and abused him. When he left the only stabilising entity in his life, Kathy Etchingham, he spiralled downwards until it seemed that he didn't care if he lived or died. It's a shame his legacy is being so badly exploited – it would have made him very uncomfortable. I miss him. ➢

©Paul Trynka; Alamy, Popsiephotos.com, Getty

1966

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 23 FRIDAY

John F. Kennedy Airport, New York

Jimi Hendrix flies first class with Pan American Airways from John F. Kennedy International Airport, New York City, to the UK. His passport, G-1044108, was issued to James Marshall Hendrix just a few hours earlier. Jimi is accompanied by his new manager Chas Chandler (bass guitarist with The Animals, who have just splintered following their summer tour of the US) and The Animals' road manager Terry McVay.

SEPTEMBER 24 SATURDAY

London International Airport, Middlesex / Scotch Of St James, 13 Mason's Yard, London SW1

The small party arrives at London International Airport (now London Heathrow), Middlesex, at about nine in the morning. After much fast-talking, Chandler manages to get Jimi Hendrix admitted into the UK on the grounds that he has songwriting royalties to collect. Terry McVay carries Jimi's guitar through customs, "because we didn't want anyone to know he was going to work".

Jimi and Chas book into the Hyde Park Towers, 41-49 Inverness Terrace, London, W2, a popular choice with London-based musicians. Jimi settles into the London scene with his first public jam at the Scotch of St James that evening; it's short-lived, as Chas quickly takes him off stage due to the immigration restriction on work, paid or unpaid. "Any chance we have, we jam," says Jimi. "That's what playing is all about, you can't express yourself by jabbering and talking all the time."

SEPTEMBER 28 WEDNESDAY

Harold Davison office, London

Noel Redding visits talent agent Harold Davison's office in the hope of an audition as guitarist for The New Animals, being formed by Eric Burdon. He's told to go to the Birdland club in Jermyn Street, London SW1, the following day.

SEPTEMBER 29 THURSDAY

Birdland, Jermyn St, London SW1 / Blaises, 121 Queen's Gate, Kensington, London SW7

After Redding's short audition at the Birdland, Chas ask Noel if he can play bass guitar. Noel says no but, being flat broke, agrees to give it a try. Redding borrows Chandler's bass and sits in with Jimi, Mike 'Nero' O'Neill of The Gladiators on piano, and Aynsley Dunbar on drums. That evening Jimi jams with the Brian Auger Trinity at Blaise's. French singer Johnny Hallyday: "I was there with Otis Redding that evening. When I heard this totally unknown guitar player, this fantastic black guy who even played very good guitar with his teeth, I got up and asked him to become part of my next show."

SEPTEMBER 30 FRIDAY

ANIM management office, 39 Gerrard Street, London W1

Chas Chandler's business partner Michael Jeffery – formerly manager of The Animals – offers Noel Redding the job as bass guitarist in The Jimi Hendrix Experience.

Clothes designer Lulu Appleton: "Jeffery had thick pebble glasses; he was distinctly unattractive. He had a little house behind Holland Park – it was always a mess. He never looked you in the eye. Half the time he didn't know the hell what he was doing. He was the quintessential parasite manager who had struck lucky."

Noel Redding: "I was glad to get the job, but I wasn't sure what it would come to. At the audition Hendrix didn't really sing, and I wasn't too sure about switching from guitar to bass."

Around this time Jimi collect-calls his father, Al, in Seattle. Jimi: "In the seven years I've been away from home I didn't see him once. I called him when I had just arrived in England. I wanted to show that I had accomplished something. He asked who I'd stolen the money from to pay for the crossing."

The cat that got the cream: Hendrix with Eric Clapton and friends, The Speakeasy, London.

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 1 SATURDAY

Polytechnic Of Central London, Little Titchfield Street, London W1

Jimi jumps on stage to jam with The Cream. Eric Clapton: "He was very, very flash – even in the dressing room – he stood in front of the mirror combing his hair and asked if he could play a couple of numbers. He did Killing Floor, a Howlin' Wolf number I've always wanted to play but which I've never really had the complete technique to do. Ginger [Baker, Cream drummer] didn't like it, and Jack [Bruce, Cream bassist] didn't like it – they'd never heard the song before. It was just... Well, he just stole the show."

OCTOBER 5 WEDNESDAY

Birdland, Jermyn Street, London SW1 / Les Cousins, 49 Greek Street, London W1

Mitch Mitchell, sacked from Georgie Fame's Blue Flames on Monday, October 3, is told by Fame's manager John Gunnell that Chas Chandler is in search of a drummer for his new guitarist.

Mitch Mitchell: "John mentioned that Chas Chandler and Jimi Hendrix, a friend of his, were over here, and would I care to go and have a play?"

Chas: "We had quite a few drummers lined up, and narrowed it down to Aynsley Dunbar and Mitch Mitchell... Neither Jimi nor I could make up our minds, so we ended up spinning a coin – it's a pity the coin ran the wrong way. I don't like Mitch Mitchell. He was going to get kicked out of that band every week."

Mitchell: "Hendrix said, 'OK, I'll see you around.' And Chas said there was a gig in Paris the next week with Johnny Hallyday and asked if we fancied doing it. So I said OK, and spent three days rehearsing. Then off we went and that was how it started."

That evening Jimi jams at Les Cousins with various blues performers from America, all in town for the Fifth American Folk Blues Festival. Andy Matheou, manager of Les Cousins folk club: "Alexis [Korner] thought it would be good to get everyone

together for an all-nighter with him topping the gig. That was the night Hendrix came in with Chas Chandler. And nobody had ever seen him before, this quiet dude, and he just paid his money and walked in with no fuss. Later they asked him to play and he plugs in his white Fender and does all his stuff with his teeth and just blows everybody's minds. Afterwards somebody says to Alexis, 'Wow, he's great, isn't he?' and Alexis just nods and says in that voice of his, 'Pretty good, yeah, pretty good.' I mean, imagine seeing Hendrix for the first time – 'Pretty good'."

OCTOBER
6
THURSDAY

Aberbach House, London W1

Rehearsals continue on Thursday, Friday 7 and Monday 10. Mitch: "Chas went out and got a couple of amplifiers – these little Burns 20 Watt amplifiers – and at the second rehearsal we tried to break the bloody things by throwing them down flights of stairs, and they didn't break! But ➢

Rex (2)

"HE'D EAT BREAKFAST WEARING HIS STRAT."

Chas Chandler, producer and co-manager.

What was really exciting about Jimi in the early days was the rate at which he learned. For a time we were staying together in the same flat, and this was a guy who'd be wearing a guitar all day. He'd eat breakfast with his Strat on a strap around his neck. He could incorporate ideas from anywhere. We'd go and see some obscure band, who were terrible, but he would fix upon perhaps one great thing that they did, which usually happened by accident, and incorporate it into his act.

Jimi knew all about the guitarists in Britain when we first met in New York. He asked me if he would get to meet Clapton. I told him when he got over he'd show Clapton how it was done. Which he did.

I had Hey Joe in mind as a great song for someone to cover when I saw Jimi play at Café Wha?, so it was always my intention to have that as his first single. What we didn't have was a B-side. Jimi talked about Land Of A 1000 Dances or Killing Floor, and I said, "No, think about the publishing, you've got to do your own song."

Stone Free was written, more or less totally arranged, in one night. We sat together, and I encouraged him to write about how he felt, about the women around, and that's what he did. We'd work on arrangements together on those kinds of songs, but there'd still be things he came up with that amazed me.

The Wind Cries Mary was one. We laid down the backing track, and then he says, "I've got an idea for another guitar part," goes in and overdubs it, note perfect. That amazed me.

There's one thing about songs like The Wind Cries Mary that people miss out – and that's how much country there is in them. But listen to his little two-note runs, and the way he uses the chords – it's pure country and western.

Things happened so quickly, it was all like a whirlwind. If I regret one thing, it was getting Mike Jeffery involved. I didn't have a choice. Jeffery was the one with the money and the contacts. But it was also Jeffery who'd later pull us apart. He got into this idea that he and Jimi were acid buddies. You'd try and talk to them and it was like talking to an alien. I couldn't bear to stay around.

Interviewed in 1993

London calling: Hendrix outside his flat at 34 Montagu Square, London W1.

we knew what we wanted, which was big clout, you know, big amplifiers, and make it as dramatic as possible."

Noel: "Hendrix and Mitchell kicked them about. I was horrified because gear was hard to come by."

Shortly afterwards, Hendrix buys the Marshall amplifier that will become an integral part of his sound, direct from Jim Marshall. "He told me his name was Jim Marshall, too," laughed Marshall. "James Marshall Hendrix. I thought he was looking for a deal, but he told me, 'No, I'll pay full price, I just want good services.' So shortly afterwards we started working closely with him, like we did with The Who."

OCTOBER 12 WEDNESDAY

London International Airport, Middlesex

The newly assembled Jimi Hendrix Experience fly to Le Bourget Airport, Paris, France. The band is to support Long Chris, The Blackbirds and Johnny Hallyday.

OCTOBER 13 THURSDAY

Novelty, Evreux

First official public concert of the JHE, performing four songs. The newspaper L'Eure-Eclair declares: "Johnny Hallyday's latest discovery was a singer and guitar player with bushy hair, a bad mixture of James Brown and Chuck Berry, who pulled a wry face on-stage for a quarter of an hour and also played the guitar with his teeth."

OCTOBER 14 FRIDAY

Le Rio, Nancy

The Jimi Hendrix Experience play for 15 minutes. 1,500 people attend. They play again the following night in Villerupt.

OCTOBER 18 TUESDAY

Olympia, Paris

The Hallyday package is now augmented by The Brian Auger Trinity. The Jimi Hendrix Experience perform Killing Floor, Hey Joe, and Wild Thing. Jimi also plays guitar during the finale before the intermission. French radio station Europe No 1 records the set, which is seen by 2,500 people. The band fly back to London the following day.

Noel: "Our three numbers went down a bomb. Talk about relief! We ran out to get drunk, partied, got drunker and stoned-er until 6.30am, just managing to pack up the gear in time to hump it back to London. We dreamed of having roadies."

OCTOBER 23 SUNDAY

Pye Studios, Great Cumberland Street, London W1

First Jimi Hendrix Experience studio recordings, taping a rough demo of Hey Joe and one other song (most likely Killing Floor). Noel uses Chas Chandler's Gibson EB-2 bass guitar. The rights to the song Hey Joe, composed by Billy Roberts, were administered by lawyer Martin Cohen of Third Story Music.

"To my knowledge Roberts never recorded it – that's not how it happened," says Cohen. "I don't know how he got the song out but the guy who got the song going was Dino Valenti. He told us that he had written the song and at that time he was in prison in California for drugs. I flew up to San Francisco and then drove to the prison and asked him point blank if he wrote the song. And he said he didn't write it, even though he had signed a songwriter's contract with Third Story saying that he had written it.

"This quiet dude walks in with no fuss, plugs in his white Fender and does all this stuff with his teeth."

Luckily we met someone who knew Billy Roberts and had signed up Roberts's song. But this guy was not in the music business so he signed his rights to Third Story."

Niela Miller: "Billy Roberts was my boyfriend back in 1956. I wrote the predecessor song, Baby Don't Go Downtown, in 1955. Billy learned it, changed the words and claimed authorship [of Hey Joe]. Roberts never contacted me or gave me any credit."

OCTOBER 25 TUESDAY

Scotch Of St James, London SW1

Rehearsals followed by a concert that evening. Rehearsals continue over the next few days.

OCTOBER 29 SATURDAY

London

Record Mirror is the first UK music magazine to write about Jimi Hendrix: "Chas Chandler has signed and brought to this country a 20-year-old (sic)Negro called Jim (sic) Henrix (sic) who – among other things – plays the guitar with his teeth and is being hailed in some quarters as main contender for the title of 'the next big thing'." The group go on to record Stone Free, the first song written by Jimi in London.

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 2 WEDNESDAY

Aberbach House, London W1 / De Lane Lea Music Ltd, London WC2

Morning rehearsals were followed by recordings of Can You See Me, 51st Anniversary and Fire (without vocals). Rehearsals continue for the next two days.

NOVEMBER 8 TUESDAY

Big Apple, Munich

Gerry Stickells joins the JHE as a roadie: "I knew Noel Redding and he fixed me up with the job. I had a van, you see. But as far as I was concerned it was purely a temporary job as I was on my way to work in Spain in a bar at the time." [Stickells stayed with Jimi until Hendrix's death in September 1970.]

The Experience, plus Chandler and Stickells, fly from London to Munich, Germany, for a short tour. Daytime rehearsals are followed by two shows that evening at the Big Apple. The Experience's four-day stint at the venue is an experimental affair, with material still evolving. Noel is still without a regular four-string bass guitar and instead plays a six-string Fender Bass VI, while all three members of the Experience share vocal duties.

NOVEMBER 9 WEDNESDAY

Big Apple, Munich

Rehearsals and two shows. Jimi smashes a guitar up on stage for the very first time while Mitch Mitchell does a mild Keith Moon 'act', kicking his entire drum kit down to the stage floor.

NOVEMBER 12 SATURDAY

Munich

Jimi sends a postcard to his father Al in Seattle: "I feel I must write before I get too far away. We're in Munich, Germany now. We just left Paris and Nancy, France. We're playing around London now. That's where I'm staying these days. I have my own group and will have a record out in about two months named Hey Joe. By The Jimi Hendrix EXPERIENCE... I think things are getting a little better. Your loving son, Jimi." Jimi and band fly back to London that same day.

NOVEMBER 16 WEDNESDAY

Regent Sound, 4 Denmark Street, London W1 / Olympic Sound Studios, 117 Church Road, Barnes, London SW13

Following a rehearsal with the Experience, Jimi is invited by Brian Jones to a Rolling Stones recording session for what would become *Between The Buttons*. Experience rehearsals continue.

Photoshot

NOVEMBER 24 THURSDAY

De Lane Lea Music Ltd, London WC2

The JHE re-record Hey Joe, with The Breakaways on backing vocals, later released as their first UK single. Mitch Mitchell: "Jimi was doing Hey Joe prior to meeting us. We listened to a couple of versions of it but really it was taken over by ourselves and we went to Kingsway Studios [De Lane Lea Music] and cracked it."

NOVEMBER 25 FRIDAY

Bag O'Nails, 9 Kingly Street, London W1

Press reception and concert at the small Bag O'Nails club off Regent Street. Peter Jones of Record Mirror conducts the first UK interview with Jimi: "Britain is really groovy… We don't want to be classed in any category. If it must have a tag, I'd like it to be called 'Free Feeling'."

NOVEMBER 26 SATURDAY

IBC Sound Recording Studios, 35 Portland Place, London W1 / Ricky Tick, 1A High Street, Hounslow, Middlesex

The Jimi Hendrix Experience visit The Who during a recording session. Pete Townshend: "Jimi sort of wandered in looking peculiar, just really peculiar, and Keith Moon was in a nasty mood and said, 'Who let that savage in here?' I mean, he really did look pretty wild, and very scruffy. Anyway, he walked around for a bit, and gave me a sort of lukewarm handshake, and then I never saw him again for a little while. I didn't know anything about his playing, and I never heard his music until I saw him live."

That evening the Experience support The New Animals at the Ricky-Tick. That band's fee is £25. Eric Burdon: "Jimi actually did have a right-wing attitude when he first arrived in England, and suddenly it was all turned around, and he suddenly realised that was all rubbish and that there was something else to life."

NOVEMBER 27 SUNDAY

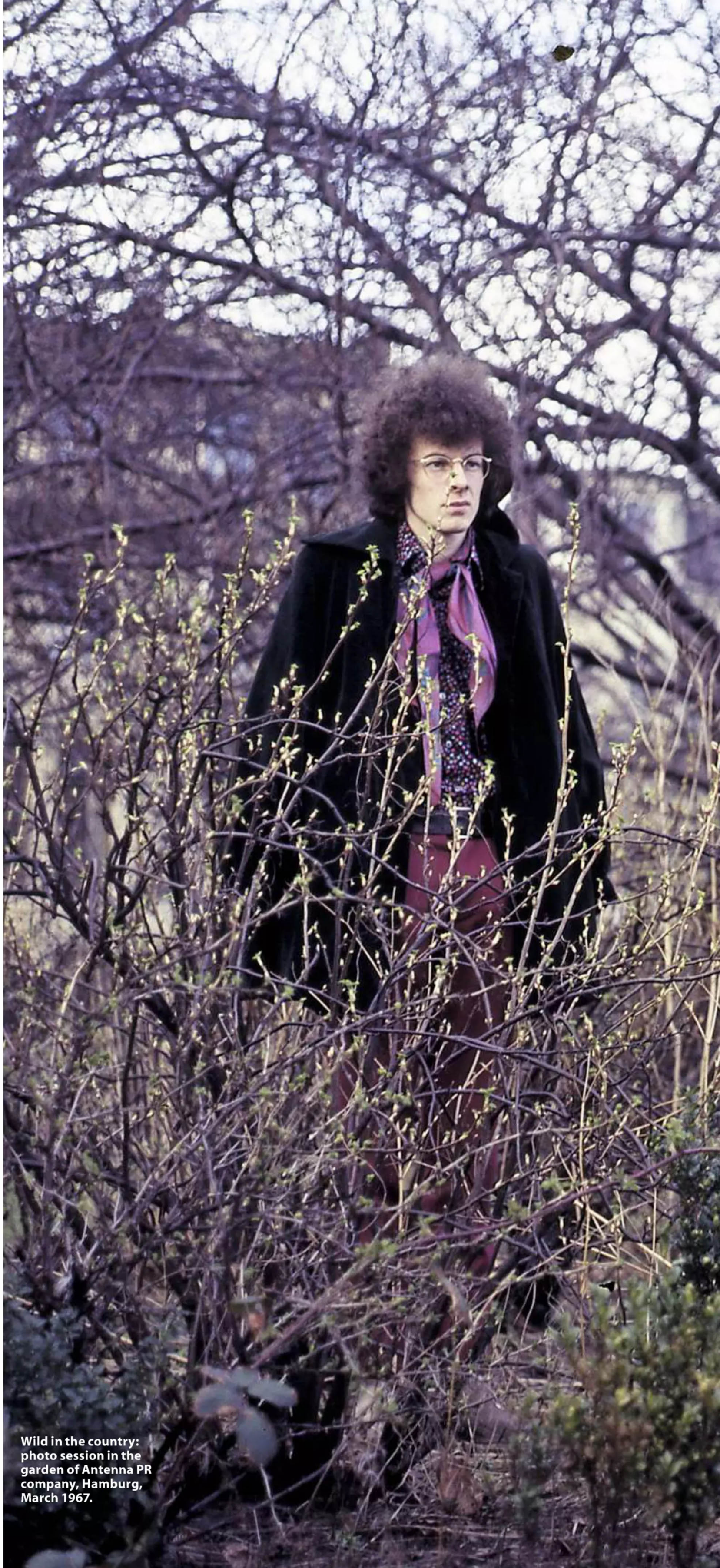
Unknown location, London

Hendrix celebrates his 24th birthday at an unknown location in the capital

NOVEMBER 30 WEDNESDAY

Blaise's, 121 Queen's Gate, Kensington, London SW7

Jimi sees The Young Rascals perform. Around this time, Jimi also jams with sax-player Lol Coxhill and others at the Cromwellian Club, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London SW7. Coxhill: "Jimi came along to sit in with a few friends and myself… We all met prior to the gig in a convenient pub and I left briefly to buy some cold sore treatment from the nearby chemist. When I returned I was asked ➢



Wild in the country: photo session in the garden of Antenna PR company, Hamburg, March 1967.

Getty

"NO SOUNDCHECKS, NO REHEARSALS"

Noel Redding, bassist

"My first thought about playing in the Experience was that it was different. I was a guitar player, so had to subtract two strings in my head to play bass. And then, of course, we were being paid £15 a week each, which was wonderful.

The first tour was in France, shortly after the band was formed, and we only did three songs a night which was just as well because the rehearsals weren't really rehearsals. We didn't learn anything; maybe just ran over a few chords and then went down the pub.

When it came to learning Jimi's tunes, we would sit down with two guitars and work through them and then I'd work them out on the bass. Jimi would have ideas and so would Chas, but while we were going through learning it, Chas would actually be recording the backing track. In those early days, there was no money for recordings so we had to work very quickly and I think we got most things down in the first two takes. But thinking about it now, I don't believe it could have been done any better. Take Red House. We'd just done Purple Haze and had 20 minutes left on the session. Chas said, 'Have you got anything else?' and Hendrix goes, 'I've got this blues in B.' So I played rhythm guitar on it – there's no bass on there. At the end of 20 minutes, we had it.

Although Jimi was the front man, we considered it a band, like he couldn't have done it without Mitch and myself. Hendrix wrote most of the material, apart from my couple of tunes. But in the studio we all made a contribution. Like Little Miss Lover, the middle part was my bit; on Remember I came up with the riff; and how to end Foxy Lady; and I suggested that Mitch use brushes on Up From The Skies.

We learnt to play as a band as we went along. Right at the beginning, it was all these very short intense gigs at small clubs in London with The Beatles and Rolling Stones watching, which really freaked me out. There were never any set-lists, we didn't do soundchecks and hardly any rehearsing. That's why there were some tunes we hardly ever did live. If we did, they would just peter out or collapse. We'd just tune up on-stage, Hendrix would say to me, 'Give me an A,' we'd say good evening to the audience, and probably kick off with Killing Floor. Very spontaneous. When we went on-stage we had no idea what we were going to do.

In the first 18 months of the band, we were really enthusiastic. Eventually it all went sour. Jimi got this attitude, Chas left and told me I should go as well. But the first 18 months were brilliant."

Interviewed in 1998

what the bottle contained and explained that if mixed with beer the liquid created a hallucinatory effect for anyone who might drink it. Then I tipped most of it into my beer, leaving enough for my lip, and drank it, assuming that apart from spoiling the beer it would have no effect whatsoever.

"When I went onto the low stage, I imagined that it was about 15 feet high and the band were hovering above a crowd of people who were dancing in a pool of blood. Hendrix was transformed into a life-size hardboard replica of himself. I remember the occasion as something which I observed as if watching a film of myself. Apparently it was a very good gig, but I can't remember much else about it."

DECEMBER

Unknown location, London

Jimi signs a contract with Yameta, set up as a tax haven via a Bahamas PO Box to "mitigate the tax of artists' income". The company would later become associated with the disappearance of millions in royalties.

Shine like stars: recording Hey Joe for Top Of The Pops at BBC's Lime Grove studios, W12, December 29, 1966.

DECEMBER **6** TUESDAY

34 Montagu Square, London W1

Chas Chandler, Lotte (Swedish girlfriend and later wife of Chas), Jimi and his girlfriend Kathy Etchingham move into a flat previously occupied by Ringo Starr, at 34 Montagu Square.

DECEMBER **10** SATURDAY

The Ram Jam Club, 390 Brixton Road, London SW9

The JHE support John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. Journalist Chris Welch: "It was only a very tiny place – just a downstairs basement room with one half set aside for gambling!"

DECEMBER **11** SUNDAY

Unknown location, London

Jimi visits the legendary rock'n'roller Little Richard at his hotel and borrows $50.

DECEMBER **13** TUESDAY

Studio One, Wembley, Middlesex / CBS Studios, 73 New Bond Street, London W1

For their first TV appearance, on Ready, Steady, Go!, the JHE perform a live version of Hey Joe. Their fee is £91 8s 5d. Album sessions continue as the Experience start recordings for Foxy Lady and Third Stone From The Sun.

DECEMBER **15** THURSDAY

The Speakeasy Club, 48 Margaret Street, London W1

'The Speak' opens. Owned by Roy Flynn (later manager of Yes) and Mike Carey, it will become Jimi's favourite hang-out in London. Before long Jeffery and the Experience built up a large bar tab; in 1968 the club had a fire, and according to Jeffery's assistant Trixie Sullivan, "We were all laughing 'cos our bills would have burned down with it. But all the bills arrived anyway!"

DECEMBER **16** FRIDAY

Chislehurst Caves, Old Hill, Bromley, Kent

The first Jimi Hendrix Experience single, Hey Joe, backed with Stone Free, is released by Polydor in England. A photocall takes place that day, followed by the Bromley concert.

DECEMBER **21** WEDNESDAY

CBS Studios, London W1 / Blaise's, London SW7

More album recording, with a show in the evening. Jeff Beck: "One night we were out on the town looking around for some girlies. We went down to Blaise's and I heard this sound blasting up the road and got out of the cab, and then went in there, and there was Jimi and I couldn't believe it…"

DECEMBER **22** THURSDAY

Guild Hall, Southampton, Hants

The Jimi Hendrix Experience play two shows supporting Geno Washington And The Ram Jam Band. The band's fee is £20.

Geno Washington: "I'm a uniform freak, so in this little old corner street, I looked up and I see this jacket [at Moss Brothers, London]. To me it's the most beautiful jacket I've ever seen in my life. I walked in and talked to the store owner and he said, 'This jacket ain't shit, it's an original – 100 pounds.'

I said, Fuck, I only got 50; I'll run to the bank and I'll give you the other 50. 'You got it, give me the 50 right down in my hand.' So I come back, Hey man, where's my jacket? And he said, 'I'm sorry, I sold the jacket to Jimi Hendrix.'

I said, What?! He said, 'Look, he came in and he gave me £200 pounds. Here's your 50 quid back.'"

Photoshot, Alamy

DECEMBER **24** SATURDAY

The Hey Joe single attracts rave reviews in the UK music press. Peter Jones in Record Mirror: "Should justice prevail, this'll be a first-time hit… Marvellous blues feel to it, well-sung at slowish tempo, a slow-burner of immense excitement. Jimi, building his name around the clubs now, is obviously a talent to watch. Flip is more urgent and equally soul-laden."

New Musical Express: "Here's a young man who could make a profound impression in the future. This is a raw, uninhibited treatment of a traditional number. It's in the insidious R&B pattern, with thundering drums, some spine-tingling guitar work and a hypnotic slow beat. It's guttural, earthy, convincing and authentic… This is a disc for the connoisseurs."

DECEMBER **26** MONDAY

The Upper Cut, Woodgrange Road, Forest Gate, London E7

Jimi writes Purple Haze in the dressing-room while waiting to go on stage. The song is often incorrectly seen as drug-inspired, an interpretation Hendrix always denied: "It was just a straight dream I had, linked to a story about a purple death ray I read in a science-fiction magazine."

Almost all of the lyrics in Purple Haze can be traced back to a story written by Philip José Farmer (later expanded into a novel), which was first published in 1957 as Night Of Light: Day Of Dreams. Jimi only changed the story slightly by introducing a woman as the 'cause' of his 'purple haze' confusion/madness.

DECEMBER **29** THURSDAY

BBC Lime Grove Studios Area C, Lime Grove, London W12

TV recordings for Top Of The Pops, with the Experience performing Hey Joe live with The Breakaways on backing vocals. The JHE fee is £78 15s.

DECEMBER **31** SATURDAY

Hillside Social Club, 14-16 Dover Road, Folkestone, Kent

The day that Jimi plays at Folkestone, Hey Joe enters the UK chart at Number 38.

After the show, Jimi attends a New Year's Eve party at the house of Noel's mother Margaret in Folkestone and plays the tune First Footing.

Margaret Redding: "It was very cold that night. Jimi asked me if it would be all right to stand next to the fire. That's how he got the idea for the song Fire."

Fire man: at the Ricky Tick in Hounslow, February 3, 1967.

1967

JANUARY

JANUARY 7 SATURDAY

New Century Hall, Corporation Street, Manchester

Support comes from The Silverstone Set and DJ Dave Eager. After the gig Jimi and the band see The Spellbinders at Manchester's Twisted Wheel club.

Mitch: "Four middle-aged men jumped on us, knocked me around and broke Noel's glasses. They were plain-clothes police."

JANUARY 8 SUNDAY

The Tollbar, Mojo A Go-Go, Burngreave Road, Sheffield

Live show, advertised locally as 'The New Weirdo Trio Jimi Hendrick's Experience'.

JANUARY 10 TUESDAY

Montagu Square W1

Jimi writes the lyrics for The Wind Cries Mary at his 34 Montagu Square flat after a row over dirty pots and pans with his girlfriend Kathy 'Mary' Etchingham: "All the incidents were what happened. I smashed plates on the floor, he swept them up, I ran out to get a taxi and was standing under the traffic lights, and I had red hair and was in a red dress. I went back after I'd cooled down and he'd already written it."

JANUARY 11 WEDNESDAY

CBS Studios, London W1 / Bag O'Nails, London W1

Jimi is signed to Kit Lambert's new label Track Records. The Experience record backing tracks for Purple Haze and Fire, as well as a demo of Jimi's recently penned The Wind Cries Mary. The demo turns out better than later attempts at the song, and will be released as the single. The Experience's two shows at the Bag O'Nails will take place in front of their most prestigious audience to date. A galaxy of London scenesters attend, including Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Bill Wyman, Pete Townshend, John Entwistle, Eric Clapton, Lulu, Donovan, Eric Burdon, Georgie Fame, Geno Washington and Denny Laine.

Disc reporter Mike Ledgerwood: "It was certainly a night to remember. Jimi did two spots of powerful, full-blooded blues which produced some amazing sounds and guitar gymnastics. He looks set to become one of the brightest stars of '67."

After the two sets, electronics guru Roger Mayer meets Jimi for the first time. Mayer's effect boxes would play a major part in Jimi's sound in the months to come.

Getty

Mayer: "Obviously Jimi was giving everyone quite a considerable amount of direction. He was the main man, and the ideas emanated from him; Mitch and Noel's function was to fulfil what he had in his head. If there was any animosity between them, I would think it was out of a kind of musical jealousy. You'd imagine that Mitch and Noel must have felt a bit on the outside, just because of the speed at which Jimi was developing. If you were on-stage beside him, you knew there was no way you could upstage him – so it's a bit of a one-sided show in a way."

JANUARY 12 THURSDAY

Olympia National Hall, Hammersmith Road, London W6 / 7½ Club, London W1

A mimed appearance for The 1967 International Racing Car Show at the Radio London display. Jimi: "So far, the only thing I was asked to mime on was a Radio London appearance and I felt guilty just standing there holding a guitar. If you want to scream and holler at a record you can do that at home – I'm strictly a live performer."

The 7½ Club performance is the first of a two-night stint.

JANUARY 17 WEDNESDAY

Tiles, 79-89 Oxford Street, London W1 / 7½ Club, London W1

The earlier performance is a live Radio Luxembourg show for Ready Steady Radio! The Experience run up a bar bill of £2 5s, which they are unable to pay.

JANUARY 18 WEDNESDAY

BBC Lime Grove Studios, Lime Grove, London W12 / 7½ Club, London W1

The BBC Studios appointment is a recording for Top Of The Pops, once more performing Hey Joe live. The JHE fee: £78 15s.

JANUARY 19 THURSDAY

Speakeasy, London W1

The Jimi Hendrix Experience play the Speakeasy club in near Oxford Circus. That weekend they play the Haverstock Hill Country Club and the Golders Green Refectory in north London, and the Astoria in Oldham.

JANUARY 24 TUESDAY

Marquee, 90 Wardour Street, London W1

After a photocall, the JHE play the Marquee, with Syn in support. They break attendance records at the venue, with queues down the street and over 1,000 people squeezed inside. By now they can earn £800 a night.

JANUARY 25 WEDNESDAY

The Orford Cellar, Norwich, Norfolk

Live show, supported by The Orford Discotheque System. That weekend, they played to 2,000 people in the Chislehurst Caves in Bromley, and at the Upper Cut Club in east London's Forest Gate.

JANUARY 29 SUNDAY

Saville Theatre, 135-149 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1

Two shows, on a bill that includes The Who, The Koobas, and Thoughts, MC'd by Mike Quinn. Pete Townshend: "Kit Lambert, our manager, had just signed Jimi to our label [Track Records] and put him on [as support]. I couldn't really believe it. I thought, Jesus Christ, what's going to happen? He knocked the amplifier over, he practically smashed it up… And I went on afterwards and I just stood and strummed." Eric Clapton: "Jimi played this gig that was just blinding. I don't think Jack [Bruce] had really taken him in before. I knew what he was capable of from the minute I met him. It was the complete embodiment of the different aspects of rock'n'roll guitar rolled up into one. I could sense it coming off the guy. And when Jack did see it that night, after the gig he went home and came up with the riff [for The Sunshine Of Your Love]. It was strictly a dedication to Jimi. And then we wrote a song on top of it."

"He knocked the amplifier over, practically smashed it up. I went on afterwards and just strummed."

JANUARY 30 MONDAY

BBC Broadcasting House, Great Portland Place, London W1

Live radio recordings for the BBC's Pop North.

JANUARY 31 TUESDAY

Saville Theatre, London W1

Shooting for Hey Joe promo video, with Australian filmmaker Peter Clifton.

FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 1 WEDNESDAY

London /New Cellar Club, Thomas Street, South Shields

Press interviews. When Jimi is asked what makes the Experience so popular, he replies: "Oh, goodness, I don't know. I can't believe it's happening. I can't stay in one place too long. I have to move on. I don't know why. I'm scared, scared of – what's the word? – vegetating. There's so much to see and places to go. I wish I could travel all the time…"

At the live show, support is by The Bond. Lawrence Vasey: "The club had only opened a week earlier, with a show by Cream, but the stage that was designed to rotate by an electric motor had never worked. So the staff and members of The Bond had to push it manually to move the Experience around to face the audience!" Noel: "At the end of the spot we were taken back round on the revolving stage, and the audience grabbed us as we went. I was hanging on to Jimi and he was hanging on Mitch, and we very nearly got crushed against the wall as we went round."

FEBRUARY 2 THURSDAY

Imperial Hotel, Darlington

Live show for a 200-strong audience – "Don't miss this man who is Dylan, Clapton and James Brown all in one" – with support from West Coast Promotion. Jimi backstage: "A gimmick is no good unless you have talent. Carnaby Street doesn't interest me. I have never found anything there that I like…" Kathy Etchingham: "Nobody took the blindest bit of notice of him. There was bingo before and after. Outside the bloody van broke down and we had to push it in the snow."

FEBRUARY 3 FRIDAY

Ricky Tick, Hounslow, Middlesex / Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London SW13

Live show, and studio recordings for Fire, Purple Haze, and The Wind Cries Mary.

FEBRUARY 4 SATURDAY

The Ram Jam Club, London SW9 / Flamingo, Wardour Street, London W1 / Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London SW13

Two live shows, both with All Night Workers in support. The JHE record at Olympic for the first time. Engineer Eddie Kramer's first sighting of the Experience was seeing road manager Gerry Stickells stagger up the stairs with a 4x12 Marshall speaker on his back, bellowing, "Where do I put this?"

FEBRUARY 6 MONDAY

London W1 / Star Hotel, London Road, Croydon, Surrey

Fledgling journo Steve Barker interviews Hendrix for the Polytechnic of Central London student newspaper, West One: "It's so embarrassing, man, when America is sending over The Monkees. Oh God! That kills me. I'm so embarrassed that America could be so stupid as to make somebody like that. They could have at least done it with a group that had something to offer – they got groups in the States starving to death trying to get breaks and then these fairies come up."

That evening's concert was packed, according to Hendrix fan Roger Fullilove: "The entrance fee was 10 shillings, and the JHE got £150. The venue was completely packed out, and the music room was the size of a small scout hut."

FEBRUARY 7 TUESDAY

De Lane Lea Music Ltd, London WC2

The Jimi Hendrix Experience undertake a late recording session, from seven in the evening to one in the morning, and lay down Purple Haze and Fire.

It's a busy few days – later that week they have a photoshoot in London, they play the Bromel Club at the Bromley Court Hotel in Bromley, the Locarno on Frogmore Street in Bristol, the Plaza on Market Place in Newbury, the Blue Moon on the High Street in Cheltenham and The Sinking Ship at the Underbank in Stockport.

Listen with Jimi: at his Montagu Square flat, February 1967, with Lenny, Bob and Muddy.

"Long after he's gone, the amps are still rumbling. We are left, plunged in a bath of vibrations, grooving on the last wave."

FEBRUARY 13 MONDAY

BBC Broadcasting House, Great Portland Place, London W1

Live radio recordings of Love Or Confusion, Foxy Lady, Hey Joe and Stone Free for the BBC Light programme Saturday Club with Brian Matthews.

FEBRUARY 14 TUESDAY

The Civic Hall, Grays, Essex / Valentine's Day Massacre, Speakeasy, London W1

After a London photocall, and the Grays show supported by Lot 5, Jimi and Chas attend the Speakeasy party with Roger Daltrey, Viv Prince, Peter Wyngarde, Anthony Booth, and The Pretty Things. Jimi jams with Pretty Things drummer Skip Alan and others.

Journalist Alain Dister followed him that day: "He played a rather small gymnasium, with a tiny stage at the end. The atmosphere is totally impersonal. Between 500 and 600 people have turned up. Before the show I meet Jimi at Chas Chandler's office in Gerrard Street. Jimi is standing there, all alone in a corner. He answers my questions in a friendly way. There is quite a lot of noise in the room: friends of Chas Chandler are paying a visit – former Animals including Alan Price. Jimi seems to be far away from everything, a bit melancholic.

"From the first notes onwards it is ecstasy on-stage. I never heard anything like this before. It liberates me from a lot of things. Jimi performs a ballet with his guitar… He turns it into a living object. The numbers follow each other in a flow of colours. Finally a terrific Wild Thing, during which the stage seems to burn. At the end he throws his guitar on the floor after coaxing lacerating sounds out of it.

"Long after he's left the stage, the amplifiers still are making rumbling noises. We are left, plunged in a bath of vibrations, grooving on the last wave. After the concert someone calls a taxi. Jimi, Noel, Mitch and myself are all packed inside. We are going to end the night in a club. The taxi driver is a bit drunk and causes a small accident. Someone remarks on the death of Eddie Cochran in similar circumstances. Everybody shivers. Jimi smiles faintly, while his eyes are opened wide. Then everything is back to normal…

"I'm going with Jimi and his girlfriend to the Speakeasy to eat a salad. The atmosphere there is rather violent, there are scuffles at the entrance. A lot of 'beautiful people' are drunk, or crashed. The music is very loud. Afterwards we return to Chandler's, where we listen to Jimi's next record, Purple Haze, while joints are being passed. Jimi doesn't always enjoy himself these days in London. He is getting bored. The friends of Chas Chandler are very nice, but often rather loud and a bit empty. 'Soul' is lacking. Maybe nostalgia for Jimi's homeland sneaks in?"

Getty

FEBRUARY 15 WEDNESDAY

Dorothy Ballroom, Cambridge

Live shows – in Cambridge, then at the Ricky Tick in Windsor, at York University and at the Blarney Club on Tottenham Court Road.

FEBRUARY 20 MONDAY

De Lane Lea Music Ltd, London WC2 / The Pavilion, Bath

Josephine Bayne, reporting for the Bath & Wilts Evening Chronicle: "As Jimi Hendrix bellowed Lord Have Mercy from his altar and his worshippers gazed in a silent adoration from below, I echoed his sentiments as my ribs reverberated with the intolerable volume of electronic sound… Why he needs to create horrific wailing effects on his guitar, and turn the amplifiers to full strength, I cannot imagine… He has a new single due for release next month, which is apparently freakish. Perhaps someone should tell him that the 'freakier than thou' competition is over and music is on the way back."

FEBRUARY 22 WEDNESDAY

Unconfirmed BBC radio studio, London / Speakeasy, London W1 Roundhouse, Chalk Farm, London NW1

After a live radio broadcast of Hey Joe for the BBC Light Programme's Parade Of The Pops, the Experience attend a press reception at Speakeasy for Soft Machine, who are launching their first single, Love Makes Sweet Music. Soft Machine provide support for that evening's Roundhouse show. ➢

International times: Beat Club TV recording at the Marquee club, March 2, 1967.

FEBRUARY 23 THURSDAY

De Lane Lea Music Ltd, London WC2 / The Pavilion, Marine Parade, Worthing, Sussex

Album recordings for I Don't Live Today and Red House; the Experience are paid £189 for their Sussex show. They play Leicester University and Chelmsford Corn Exchange that weekend.

FEBRUARY 26 SUNDAY

Cliffs Pavilion, Southend, Essex

The Jimi Hendrix Experience head the bill, with support from Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick & Titch, The Nashville Teens, Koobas, Force Five; Pete Murray MCs.

MARCH

MARCH 1 WEDNESDAY

Speakeasy, London W1 / De Lane Lea Music Ltd, London WC2 / Orchid Ballroom, Brighton Road, Purley

The Experience are now using their favourite London club for rehearsing. The evening session was for the Experience's version of Dylan's Like A Rolling Stone, but the tape has never surfaced.

MARCH 2 THURSDAY

Marquee, London W1

Live TV recordings for the German programme Beat Club of Hey Joe and Purple Haze. The JHE fly to Paris the next day.

MARCH 4 SATURDAY

Omnibus, Colombes, Paris / Faculté De Droit D'Assas, Paris

A gig at Omnibus in Colombes, a radio interview at Europe 1, and another show at the Law Society Graduation Ball at the Faculté De Droit D'Assas, with The Pretty Things supporting.

Photographer Alain Dister: "At the studio they let Jimi listen to Johnny Hallyday's version of Hey Joe. Without much embarrassment he politely makes clear that he is not impressed. Because Jimi loves things that are baroque, I take him to the fleamarket in Saint-Ouen. He seems to enjoy himself enormously, nosing through the old jewellery, curtain ropes, uniforms from the days of the Empire, all kinds of things that he buys without even discussing the price with the merchants. He buys some rings with large sparkling stones. Then as he leaves, a rocker passes by and whispers to me: 'That guy you're with, is that Little Richard?'"

Writer Jean-Noël Coghe was at that night's performance: "Boys in smoking jackets and girls in maxis. The place is a huge hall where thousands of people crowd around. In the dressing room it's very hot and everyone's thirsty. Jimi stands in a corner. Isolated from the rest, he plays his guitar. Then a cyclone enters – it's one of the organisers, looking sure of himself. He walks directly towards Chas Chandler. Almost solemnly he says: 'Mr Hendrix, it's time,' which causes laughter from everybody except Mr Hendrix and Mr Chandler… When Jimi enters the stage they realise that the current doesn't reach the amplifiers. Panic among the organisers. The law students accuse the students of Beaux-Arts, and particularly those of the brass band, of stealing the transformer. But everything finally ends up right. Just in front of the stage a young blonde woman in a long yellow dress hides frightened in her boyfriend's arms. Jimi is crouching, sweating, yelling and playing his guitar wildly with his teeth."

Rex

MARCH 5 SUNDAY

Twenty Club, Mouscron, Belgium / Twenty Club, Lens, France

The Experience fly from Paris to Belgium for a daytime show, returning later for the Lens performance.

MARCH 6 MONDAY

Zoniënwoud, St Pieters Woluwe

Flying to Belgium again, the Experience mime Hey Joe in the Zoniënwoud forest for Belgian TV show Vibrato. Humo magazine writer Jan Waldrop: "The big, quiet Zoniënwoud rustles in the cold spring wind, an old man gathers wood. His toothless mouth falls open at the arrival of Jimi Hendrix: 'I have never seen anything like that before!' Thousands have said the same when they witnessed the new pop phenomenon… Jimi has an overwhelming amount of hair, an almost picturesque head. Between his friendly dog-eyes lies a nose like a trampled-down rubber hose. And as if he feared in spite of all this he would remain unnoticed, he wears cracking red trousers and a fantastic military dress-coat."

MARCH 7 TUESDAY

Universal Video studio, Waterloo, Belgium

Mime performances of Hey Joe and Stone Free for the Belgium TV show Tienerklanken. After the show, the Experience head back to London.

MARCH 9 THURSDAY

London / Skyline Ballroom, Jameson Street, Hull, Yorkshire

Photocall and live show in Hull with support from The Family, The Small Four, The Strollers and The Mandrakes. That weekend they play Club A Go Go in Newcastle and the International Club in Leeds.

"OUT THERE, BUT IN CONTROL…"

Richard Thompson, guitarist

"It's probably true that every guitarist was talking about Jimi when he came over to Britain, because he went that bit further. He was an erotic figure – that's a frightening thing for a suburban art-school guitarist. He loosened everything up, in the way John Coltrane made the saxophone's honks and squeaks acceptable. Hendrix incorporated fuzzboxes and feedback, which had been used before and entered the vocabulary, but he really made it a part of the language of the music.

The first time I saw him was at The Refectory, Golders Green [January 21, 1967] – an unlikely venue, I know. Everybody was blown away, of course. It changed things completely, because he was so out-there, and so accomplishedly out-there. I don't know how tutored he was, but he knew his notes, where they were and what they were called – it wasn't all intuitive. It was also important that he was a guitarist/vocalist – his vocal phrasing was not dissimilar to his guitar phrasing, in the tradition of great jazz soloists like Louis Armstrong.

I don't know how much difference being left-handed made. I heard that Otis Rush switched to playing left-handed so he could use his stronger hand on the fretboard, and Jimi certainly had strong hands. On occasion he'd sit in with Fairport when we played the Speakeasy. He'd jump on stage, grab one of our guitars – which was strung the wrong way round for him – and played as well as if it had been the right way round! This was frightening stuff.

He embodied elements that the British had only got from these imported Chess records or whatever. They'd developed skills but were inevitably copyists of Freddie King or B.B. King. Some people got close to the original, but Hendrix could build on that tradition because he understood it.

Yet while Jimi brought over all those elements from America, London is the only place he could have succeeded, the only place that was loose enough. In America the black audience on the chitlin' circuit would have thought he was too out-there, the white audience wouldn't have known what to make of him, and he certainly wouldn't have got on TV. He had to be established as hip, and somehow imported. That was an inspired piece of management. Also the rhythm section they put behind Jimi was very sloppy, but if it had been John Bonham on drums it wouldn't have worked. It had to have the free-flowing element.

Another great thing: he was having hit singles with some wild ingredients – abstract, dissonant, modern ideas. He had the stranger elements of modern jazz or 20th century classical music, in a hit 45! I haven't seen a guitarist since who's come close. Technically some later players might be superior, but it's obvious they're not there. He was a supreme melodicist, like Charlie Parker. People think of him as abstract or chromatic, but there was always this melodicism, right at the centre of his music."

MARCH 12 SUNDAY

Gyro Club, Ilkley, Yorkshire

Local musician and fan Vince Philpotts: "That night was one of the highpoints of my youth, short as it was. The ballroom was designed for about 200 people but there were about 450 inside, standing on windowsills and tables. As soon as Hendrix appeared the place went wild. He started off with one hell of an instrumental, Noel Redding began with a bassline then Mitchell came in on drums. It was just a huge bang straight into the set. It was loud and excellent. Then this suicidal plain-clothes cop in gabardine gets up on the stage and tells Hendrix to shut up. He says the place is in breach of fire regulations, everyone has to go home."

Jimi drowns him out with feedback, and the officer adds to the chaos when he tries to turn off the amplifiers but turns off the lights instead. Eventually the band retreat to their dressing room, and the audience dump items of furniture in a pile by the bar as they file out. The venue is much quieter these days –it's now a nursing home.

MARCH 14 TUESDAY

Bellevue studio, Leidsekade 90, Amsterdam / Hotel Schiller, Rembrandt-splein 36, Amsterdam

TV rehearsals of Hey Joe and Stone Free for Dutch programme Fanclub. Producer Ralph Inbar is irritated because Jimi and the band arrive an hour later than arranged. Some musicians are rehearsing the so-called Na-Na-Na song (an arrangement of Land Of 1000 Dances) at which Jimi laughs uncontrollably. Mitch sarcastically praises the quality of the Dutch soul music. Writer Peter Schroder: "At that time in TV-land, one was totally not used to the volume… It was so powerful that within one minute most of the TV people in the studio had left." The director of Cabaret Lurelei, who rehearse in the same building, runs upstairs and complains that the ceiling is starting to crack. Inbar: "With all respect for Jimi Hendrix, all of us going through the ceiling was just a little too much." They ask Jimi to lower the volume; he refuses, saying he will "miss the kick". So Inbar tells Jimi he will have to mime, at which Hendrix walks out. Photographer Claude van Heye bumps into him on his way out: "I wandered around with him for about an hour. He felt defeated, so I could do whatever I wanted with him – he posed, very relaxed, looking attentively into the lens."

After a press reception at the Hotel Schiller, Hendrix returns to the Bellevue studio for the Fanclub appearance. Presenter Judith Bosch announces Jimi as "the guitar eater", and the cameramen have instructions to focus on Hendrix's head during Hey Joe, for the moments he'll be playing the guitar with his teeth. But Jimi barely opens his mouth and looks obviously uninterested. Inbar leaps up and demands his cameramen switch to long-shots. After the second song, Stone Free, Jimi leaves the stage without waiting for any reaction. Two minutes later Hendrix is on his way to his hotel to prepare for some serious clubbing.

"This suicidal plain-clothes cop in gabardine gets on stage and tells Hendrix to shut up, we all have to go."

MARCH 15 WEDNESDAY

Hotel Schiller, Amsterdam

After a photocall at their hotel, the Experience depart for London.

MARCH 16 THURSDAY

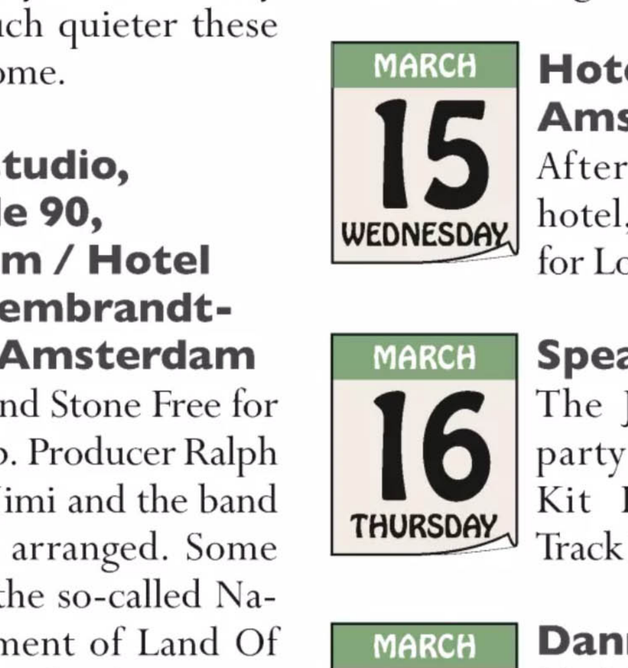
Speakeasy, London W1

The JHE attend the launch party for Chris Stamp and Kit Lambert's new label, Track Records.

MARCH 17 FRIDAY

Danny's Pan Club, Heldenkampsweg 32, Hamburg / Star-Club, Gross Freiheit, Hamburg

The second Jimi Hendrix Experience single, Purple Haze b/w 51st Anniversary, is released by Track Records in the UK. The Experience fly into Hamburg.



At the press-call before their performance at the Star-Club, photographer Günter Zint asks Jimi what he will do with his money. Jimi turns to Chas Chandler and says, "When am I going to get my money? Is there any money?"

Brown-eyed boy: Jimi with (from left) Mitch, Noel and Chas at a press conference at Danny's Pan Club in Hamburg, March 17, 1967.

MARCH 18 SATURDAY

NDR Radiohouse studio, Rothenbaum-chaussee 132-134, Hamburg / Star-Club, Hamburg

Live radio interview for German programme Twen Club, followed by two more shows at the Star-Club.

MARCH 19 SUNDAY

Antenna publicity company, Hamburg / Star-Club, Hamburg

Another interview, a photo call and two more live shows.

MARCH 20 MONDAY

Hamburg

The Jimi Hendrix Experience has one more photo call, followed by a flight from Hamburg to Luxembourg.

MARCH 21 TUESDAY

Radio Luxembourg station, Luxembourg

Radio interviews for Fab 208, followed by a flight back to London.

MARCH 22 WEDNESDAY

Mayfair, London W1

Jimi and Kathy move into their rented flat at 43 Upper Berkeley Street in Mayfair, London W1.

MARCH 23 THURSDAY

Selmers, Charing Cross Road, London WC2 / Guild Hall, Southampton, Hampshire

Jimi sells a Stratocaster at the London guitar shop, demonstrating its potential to its nonplussed aspiring owner Oliver Keen: "I suppose the manager had promised him a good deal if he could convince a customer for a sale – so here was Jimi Hendrix helping to sell his own guitar, and he did. I signed the hire purchase form. Total cost £89."

That evening, Brother Bung provide support for the Southampton show. The next day there's time for some rest and a few more interviews.

MARCH 25 SATURDAY

Starlight Room, Gliderdrome, Boston, Lincolnshire

Live show in Lincolnshire, with support from Sons And Lovers, Charades, The Steel Band and Ray Bones. The following night they play the Tabernacle Club in Stockport.

MARCH 27 MONDAY

BBC TV Studio A / Area B, Dickenson Road, Manchester

TV recordings (mimed) for the BBC programme Dee Time. After Purple Haze, the nation is treated to Kiki Dee performing I'm Going Out The Same Way I Came In, with the BBC Northern Dance Orchestra (18-strong, no less).

Writer Michael Wale: "TV is apt to tame the wildness and originality out of pop and make it presentable to the hypothetical family audience. And yet it was partly the wildness of The Jimi Hendrix Experience that was responsible for the successful launching of Dee Time. The visual collision of Hendrix and a British provincial high-tea audience was an instant success. 'Family audience' equals voyeurism."

MARCH 28 TUESDAY

BBC Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London W1 / Assembly Hall, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire

Live radio recordings for Saturday Club. That night the Jimi Hendrix Experience play to a raucous crowd at the Assembly Hall on Market Square in Aylesbury. ➢

Getty

Partially wired: Jimi changes a string at the Beat Club TV recording at the Marquee.

MARCH 29 WEDNESDAY

De Lane Lea Music Ltd, London WC2

The JHE work on recordings of Manic Depression, Red House and Remember.

MARCH 30 THURSDAY

BBC Lime Grove Studios / Area C, Lime Grove, London W12

TV recordings (miming Purple Haze) for two editions of Top Of The Pops.

MARCH 31 FRIDAY

The Astoria, Finsbury Park, London N4

The start of the Experience's first major UK tour, with two performances each night. The package comprises The Walker Brothers, JHE, Cat Stevens, Engelbert Humperdinck, The Californians, The Quotations, and Nick Jones as the MC.

NME's Keith Altham: "In the dressing room various things were being discussed about what they could actually do that night to grab some headlines and capture people's attention. I had a Varaflame lighter and I said, What would happen if he set fire to his guitar? I kind of said it as a joke and Chas said, 'That's not a bad idea, if he uses lighter fuel it will just burn the lighter fuel.' So we tried a couple of experimental runs in the dressing room and it worked, and Jimi used it later on-stage [during Fire]. It caused an enormous bloody row with one of the security officers in the theatre. He threatened that Jimi would never work on his circuit again… He would have him banned from every theatre on his tour. He came storming around afterwards looking for the guitar as evidence. The gentleman who was his agent at the time – who had the appropriate name of Tito Burns – colluded with Jimi, hid his guitar underneath his raincoat and walked out the stage door with it."

Jimi got his Strat back a few days later and kept it as a souvenir until May 1968, when one of his roadies gave the guitar's burned neck to Frank Zappa in Miami.

APRIL

APRIL 1 SATURDAY

Gaumont, Ipswich, Suffolk

The tour continues with a show in Ipswich and, the following evening, at Worcester.

APRIL 3 MONDAY

Olympic Sound Studios, London SW13

The first of two days' recording. The tour then resumes on Wednesday April 5 at Leeds, before visiting Glasgow, Carlisle, Chesterfield, Liverpool, Bedford, Southampton and Wolverhampton.

"HE WASN'T IN A BAND – HE WAS THE BAND"

Rex, courtesy Gered Mankovitz

Gered Mankowitz, photographer

"I'd known Chas Chandler for some time through promoters Rik and John Gunnell, and the first time I saw Jimi was when Chas called me and asked me to go down to a club, I think the Bag O'Nails [January 11, 1967], for a showcase performance he'd organised.

I went to this place, and this extraordinary bloke got up and played guitar like no one had ever seen or heard. To be honest, I didn't really like the music at first; I've grown to like it but at the time I found some of it harsh and grating. But even I could see this was a phenomenal talent. The astonishing thing was that even at that point this gig was full of musos, and there was already a great buzz. I think Clapton was there, Peter Townshend was definitely there, Jimmy Page was there, and all these guys were absolutely speechless. Gobsmacked. It was an extraordinary display, so much wilder than anything we'd seen, no one could really understand how he was doing it. I suppose cos he was left-handed, playing it the wrong way round.

Jimi was unique visually. He had the classic rock hero figure – biggish head, hipless and quite wide shoulders; a great shape for rock'n'roll. Jimi wore the clothes like no one else had worn them. He'd wear cloaks, scarves, incredible tiny velvet trousers and big belts, military jackets, of course, and carried it off where other people looked ridiculous.

He was easy to photograph: generally I'd try and capture people's personalities, rather than generate one, but it wasn't often as successful as it was with Jimi. He was visually so remarkable. There wasn't an individual I worked with who had the same visual power.

I don't know of any musicians who disliked Jimi, but if there was jealousy I think it was because of his status as a solo performer; as Jimi Hendrix and the Experience, it was his show. Everybody else was just in a band. Jimi was the guitarist as hero, leader, singer, songwriter, fashion icon, sex symbol. That was a fundamental difference."

APRIL 17 MONDAY

The Speakeasy Club, London W1

TV recordings, followed by a late-night jam with Georgie Fame (organ) and, on drums, Ben E. King: "He was playing on the stuff that I was doing in my show during those days – Spanish Harlem, Stand By Me, things like that. It was very free-flowing because that was his style. He knew the songs and the music, so we just let him do his thing."

APRIL 20 THURSDAY

ABC, Lincoln, Lincolnshire

Following a show the previous night in Birmingham, the tour hits Lincoln. Unknown reporter: "The day began for Jimi Hendrix in a rough-and-tumble exit from a modest hotel to the theatre in Birmingham where the coach was about to leave for Lincoln. Another day, another show. Jimi sank into a place halfway down the coach. He tried to appear ordinary, as disbelieving faces surveyed him from a nearby building site. Since he was dressed in a fur-trimmed jacket from the Crimean War and resembled a lion and his tamer all rolled into one, this was a somewhat difficult exercise. Behind him, Mitch and Noel, newly emerged from a visit to a joke shop, occasionally let off smoke bombs and disappeared behind a purple haze. A normal day for The Jimi Hendrix Experience. On the journey, Jimi thoughtfully chewed matchsticks and fiddled with a red rubber nose from which a can-can dancer's shapely leg spasmodically kicked. But mostly be looked through the window and let ideas run wild in his mind. There was the inevitable stop at the motorway caff, the weary search for a hotel, the inspection of the new dressing room. Then the long, long hours at the theatre until it was time to creep on stage…"

The reviewer in the Lincolnshire Echo reported: "A great guy on and off-stage, Jimi Hendrix was in a very bouncy mood. His opening remark was: 'I am going to put a curse on everyone so that all their babies are born naked.' A remark which he obviously thought had some deep significance. During the show a score of girls rush the stage. The Experience quickly go to their smoky dressing room and collapse. And soon it was time to pack. Another day. Another show. Another coach to catch."

APRIL 21 FRIDAY

City Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne

The show at Newcastle is followed by further dates at Manchester, Hanley, Bristol, Cardiff and Aldershot.

APRIL 28 FRIDAY

Adelphi, Slough, Buckinghamshire / UFO Club, 31 Tottenham Court Road, London W1

Live show followed by a return to London and the capital's premier underground niterie, where Jimi jammed on bass with Tomorrow's singer Keith West, drummer Twink and guitarist Steve Howe: "In the mayhem of one of the guitar/sitar jams thundering away, the bass player laid his bass on the floor to do some erotic dancing with a girl. Suddenly Jimi Hendrix walked up on-stage, picked up the bass and broke into a freak-out bass part. Then he walked off. We were knocked out. He was amicable, reachable. He smiled."

APRIL 30 SUNDAY

Granada, Mitcham Road, Tooting Broadway, London SW17

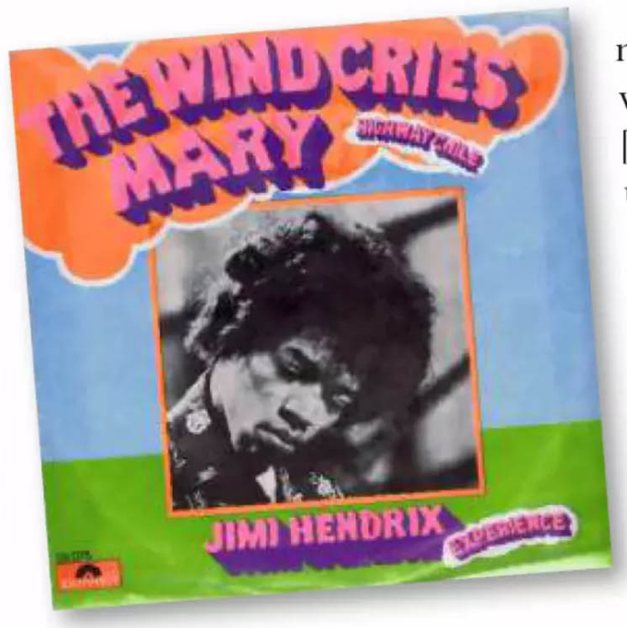
After a show at Bournemouth, the first Hendrix UK tour winds up in Tooting. Jimi: "Sure, the tour ➢

was good experience, but our billing position was all wrong. I was setting the stage on fire for everyone else… and that Engelflumplefuff hadn't any stage presence. He never got anything going. He stopped it all stone dead."

Mitch: "Yeah, Engelbert Dump-A-Drunk! It was a strange kind of tour to be on… No, I don't remember any great sabotage. I think there were more people shouting at our dressing room for, like, 'Engelbert, Engelbert'. At that point in time I suppose it was the 'Wild Man of Pop', quote unquote. I would have thought that with Engelbert and the Squawker Brothers that it was more a family audience syndrome. A rock'n'roll band was thrown in the middle of this. Quite a smart management move really"

Jimi: "I really learned a lot about British audiences because every night we had two more to meet, and after each show Chas and I would discuss how everything went down and ways to improve. In the theatre at Luton [possibly Bedford] one guy jumped about 20 feet from a box onto the stage, just to shake hands with us. We'd step outside the stage-door where the teenyboppers were and think, Oh, they won't bother us… And get torn apart!

"A girl was hanging onto my guitar saying, 'You don't want it.' I said to her, You must be out of your mind! We were good in something called Leicester, too. It was a gas, in spite of the hassles."



MAY

MAY 10 WEDNESDAY

Unknown location, London

TV recordings of The Wind Cries Mary, followed the next day by a visit to Paris for TV recordings of Hey Joe and four other songs.

MAY 12 FRIDAY

Bluesville '67, Seven Sisters Road, London N4

Are You Experienced, the first Jimi Hendrix Experience album is released by Track Records in the UK.

Melody Maker: "One of the most pleasing aspects of Jimi Hendrix's success is his refusal to be blatantly 'commercial'… Subsequently we're getting the real Hendrix on this album… [The songs] thunder and charge along on some hammering tempos. They change speed mid-number, stop, start, fade, fizzle, simmer, and burn in a cauldron of beautiful fire."

The front cover photograph for the LP was taken by Bruce Fleming: "They picked the wrong picture," he explained. "There was a much better one which I begged [management] to use. Much more dramatic. But they used a pretty boring one. We would always try to do something different. Jimi was oblivious to everybody else anyway. He didn't pose. A lot of the rock'n'roll people and a lot of 'pop stars', in quotes, at that time, would do big poses for you. A bit phony, really. Jimi couldn't do that anyway – he thought telling the truth was a better deal than telling lies."

Writer David Toop: "That night was the first time I saw The Jimi Hendrix Experience play live. We queued on the stairs and rushed for the front row. Breathless, palpitating, we were close enough to touch the group when filed on stage. During the climax of the act, a roadie had to stand behind the amps to prevent Hendrix from pushing them through a pub window into the streets below."

MAY 13 SATURDAY

Imperial College, London SW7

Live show, followed the next day by a trip to Manchester to play the Belle Vue New Elizabethan, with Jimmy Savile as DJ.

MAY 15 MONDAY

Neue Welt, West Berlin

Live show supported by The Beat Cats, Restless Sect, Shatters and Manuela. The German and Scandinavian dates rolled through Munich, Frankfurt, Gothenburg, Karistad, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Malmö, Stockholm, Kiel, Herford.

MAY 29 MONDAY

Barbeque '67, Tulip Bulb Auction Hall, Spalding, Lincolnshire

Cream, Geno Washington And The Ram Jam Band, The Move, Pink Floyd, Zoot Money And His Big Roll Band and others share the bill, which attracts a 4,000-strong crowd.

Writer Germaine Greer: "The air was hot and rank because all the sliding cattle-doors were shut but one and there were no windows. As usual an unlimited number of tickets had been sold and the promoter [Colin Ward of Live Promotions] had split, leaving the kids to struggle in the heat and the dirt while the police snooped around them with dogs trained to sniff out the drugs that none of them had the money to buy.

"There was Jimi caught like a little bird underneath the corrugated iron roof in the stink of cattle-shit and English youth."

"We got in, in the chaos, for nothing, and there was Jimi caught like a little bird underneath the corrugated iron roof in the stink of cattle-shit and sweating English youth. The crowd was so dense that those who fainted couldn't even fall down. Jimi was wrestling to get his guitar in tune, and cursing the gear that they had to use… The kids were restive and abusive. Jimi began to play and the sound was terrible so he stopped. They jeered, so he yelled, 'Fuck you. I'm gonna get my guitar in tune if it takes me all fucking night.' Then as now they didn't even care whether Hey Joe was in tune or not… But Jimi wanted, like he always wanted, to play it sweet and high. So he did."

JUNE

JUNE 4 SUNDAY

Saville Theatre / Speakeasy, London W1

Before he goes on to see The Turtles at 'The Speak', two sold-out shows at the Saville represent Jimi's farewell to the UK. Supports act are the Stormsville Shakers, Procol Harum, The Chiffons, and Denny Laine And His Electric String Band.

Noel: "The 'Farewell' show is bound to be a biggy. We even rehearse for it and do a special photo session."

MAY 4 THURSDAY

Unknown location, London

TV recording of Purple Haze; the following day, the third JHE single, The Wind Cries Mary b/w Highway Chile, is released in the UK, and will climb to Number 6. At the weekend the group perform at Nelson, Lancashire, and London's Saville Theatre.

MAY 9 TUESDAY

Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, London W1 / Olympic Sound Studios, London SW13

Jimi is a guest of honour at the Variety Club of Great Britain's lunch in tribute to the recording industry, followed by recording sessions in Barnes.

Watch out for your ears: Hendrix wows his fellow countrymen at Monterey Pop Festival, June 19, 1967.

Paul McCartney: "The curtains flew back and Jimi came walking forward playing Sgt. Pepper; it had only been released on the Thursday so that was the ultimate compliment. It's a shining memory because I liked him so much anyway, he was so accomplished. I put that down as one of the greatest honours of my career."

Hugh Nolan: "It was Jimi's audience and Jimi's night. He started his set with a driving version of Sgt. Pepper, then blasted out Like A Rolling Stone, Hey Joe, Purple Haze and The Wind Cries Mary. Throughout the whole set Jimi kept up a constant stream of happy talk, achieving a fantastic sense of communication with the star-studded audience. He said: 'This is our last gig here for a long time so we're gonna make it nice.'

"Then, to a smashing, ear-splitting Are You Experienced?, Jimi was handed a guitar from the wings – a guitar he's painted in glorious swirling colours and with a poem written on the back dedicated to Britain and its audience – and crashed it about the stage, hurling what was left to eager souvenir-hunters. If he returns to Britain, Jimi Hendrix can be sure that things will never be the same again here."

Getty

JUNE 13 TUESDAY

London International airport

The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Chas Chandler, Mike Jeffery and Keith Altham, covering the trip for the NME, travel to London International airport in Mike Jeffery's Rolls-Royce and depart first class for JFK. In eight months Hendrix has assembled his band, written and recorded an album that is only kept off the Number 1 slot by The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper.*, scored three UK hit singles and created a furore across Europe. His Monterey performance five days later will be the first step in establishing his reputation in the US. Ⓜ

Diary by Caesar Glebbeek; interviews by Paul Trynka. Contact Caesar and UniVibes International Jimi Hendrix Magazine at univibes@tiscali.it

The boys of summer: The Lovin' Spoonful (from left) Joe Butler, John Sebastian, Steve Boone, Zal Yanovsky.

HERE COME THE NICE

The Lovin' Spoonful epitomised the euphoric, carefree spirit of the Summer of Love. But then came an unwanted 'American Beatles' tag, "demented behaviour" and a drug bust that turned them into hippy finks. Dave DiMartino tells the story of a much misunderstood, vastly talented band who watched the flower-power dream turn sour.

IT IS MARCH 2000 IN NEW YORK AND A GROUP of friends and former business partners have gathered for dinner in a small room. It is private party for The Lovin' Spoonful, together once again to be inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame. But this is not that circus, it is another, instigated by former manager Bob Cavallo. Along with band members, wives and significant others are Spoonful producer Erik Jacobsen and the band's former publicist Dan Moriarty.

Into the room comes guitarist Zal Yanovsky, the colourful Canadian who'll die two years later from a heart attack, and who today, as a successful restauranteur in his homeland, thinks nothing of scrutinising the bottles of red and white wine sitting on the table before him. "Is this the only wine we're having?" he asks Cavallo.

Cavallo, who has selected the wines, looks at Yanovsky. "Why? Not good enough?"

"I'm surprised at you, Bob," Zal tells his former manager. "For the people that care, can we look at the list of wines and get something *good*? "

Cavallo assents, his attention drawn elsewhere. Yanovsky finds a wine list, scans it carefully, then says, "Here's a great one, from France. I'm having a bottle of this. Who else wants a bottle?" Producer Jacobsen nods his head, and two bottles are fetched.

Minutes later, as the conversation bounces merrily back and forth, Yanovsky looks over at Cavallo, then at his former Spoonful partners, then at Jacobsen, then at their glasses full of French wine. "Who all here *got fired*?" Zal asks loudly, raising his hand above his head and proudly waving it.

The humour, pathos and drama that defined the Lovin' Spoonful's brief career – from January 1965 to late 1968 or so – is about as good as any pop music story ever gets.

For that matter, so was the band. It seems puzzling, therefore, that the Spoonful have never really been afforded the respect they truly deserve, and that their contemporaries have consistently fared better by comparison in significant ways. Notably, from the early '70s until the early '00s the band's catalogue was tragically mishandled, their stellar work represented by dozens of hits collections on sub-budget labels.

"There were all these half-assed reissues with a picture of a girl sucking a lollipop on the front," recalls John Sebastian, the man who penned and sang most of the band's music. "It was hard to see our band name on a cat food can. And that happened. That happened."

At the height of their fame, The Lovin' Spoonful were seriously referred to as America's answer to The Beatles. And in the same manner as the Fab Four, the Spoonful's most memorable accomplishment may have been their awe-inspiring string of hit singles, each sounding nothing at all like the song that preceded it: Do You Believe In Magic, You Didn't Have To Be So Nice, Daydream and Summer In The City were only four of them. For a brief period, the band's touch was golden. Even the movie soundtracks they recorded were oddly high profile: What's Up Tiger Lily? was Woody Allen's first film; You're A Big Boy Now Francis Ford Coppola's second.

"Look Alive!": The Lovin' Spoonful on The Hollywood Palace TV show with host Phil 'Sgt Bilko' Silvers, September 1966.

But the group's career wound down, of course, and not in the best of ways: a marijuana bust in San Francisco involving Zal Yanovsky and bassist Steve Boone derailed the band when, under threat of the guitarist's deportation back to Canada, they turned in the seller to the police – a move not warmly received by hipsters of the era.

Yanovsky would depart in '67, to be replaced by band associate Jerry Yester, who stayed long enough to be heard on '68's *Everything Playing*. Sebastian himself split in October of that year, launching a solo career that would put him onstage at Woodstock, and only drummer/vocalist Joe Butler could be heard on *Revelation: Revolution '69*.

By then, the Revolution was over, the Spoonful was empty, and the commercials featuring Ronald McDonald singing Do You Believe In Magic were still three decades off.

But it was fun while it lasted. Sort of.

Back to earth: The Lovin' Spoonful with the 'Russian Ringo', Zal Yanovsky (far left), 1966.

THERE ARE MANY ENVIABLE CREDENTIALS A musician might have, and John Sebastian had some stunning ones, even before the Lovin' Spoonful. Born in New York, he served as musical accompanist to a slew of folkies, including Fred Neil, Tim Hardin, and Judy Collins. He was a member of the Even Dozen Jug Band, a rambling instrumental crew featuring David Grisman, Stefan Grossman, Steve Katz and Joshua Rifkin. Close-cropped and grinning on the cover of their 1964 Elektra album, Sebastian was credited as "John Benson", mainly to avoid confusion with his like-named father, a classical harmonica player ("I didn't want anybody to think, 'Oh, look at this – Sebastian is slumming'," he says.) The album was Sebastian's second trip to the recording studio; his first was for a Harry Belafonte protégé named Valentine Pringle, "at the time called a Negro baritone, which dates the project as much as anything else."

Sebastian's circle of acquaintances was vastly impressive, and a professional friendship with Elektra Records producer Paul Rothchild in the early '60s helped provide him with a studio education. Another significant relationship would bloom with producer Erik Jacobsen, a former member of an Albert Grossman-managed folk group titled the Knoblick Upper 10,000. Jacobsen handled the career of Tim Hardin and admired Sebastian's multi-instrumentalist skills, using him often in the studio.

"One day he sang something," Jacobsen recalls today. "And I said, 'Hey, man, you've got a nice voice. Why don't you write a song and we'll make a record?'" For six or eight months, the pair worked on early versions of songs such as Rooty-Toot and Warm Baby – which would surface again in Sebastian's career.

In February 1964, The Beatles made their American debut on CBS television's Ed Sullivan Show. And on that same night, clustered together at the New York apartment of Mama Cass Elliot, was an intriguing array of musicians including both John Sebastian and a man whom Cass had earlier promised was going to be Ringo.

"I don't know why, but I didn't question how Ringo could be on the Ed Sullivan Show and simultaneously be in Cass's living room," says Sebastian. "But I'd already met so many amazing people in Cass's living room that I somehow didn't question it. So I went over, and indeed here was a very sort of tall *version* of Ringo – prominent nose, hair down to here. But there was one obvious difference – this is the *Russian*-flavoured Ringo."

The man was Zalman Yanovsky, guitarist for the Nova Scotia folk group the Halifax Three, and soon member of the Mugwumps, a short-lived quartet featuring Yanovsky, Cass Elliott, her future The Mamas And The Papas partner Denny Doherty and her then husband James Hendricks.

Sebastian and Yanovsky struck up a friendship that very night. "Even in those infant times," notes Sebastian, "it seemed to already make sense. Our backgrounds were remarkably similar, in that we had both been accompanists to folk singers or folk groups, and we had both worked in guitar-heavy rock'n'roll bands."

Shortly thereafter Sebastian got the call to go to Washington DC to work as a sideman with Cass and Yanovsky at The Shadows, a nightclub owned by Bob Cavallo. And within a week, back in Greenwich Village, Erik Jacobsen remembers getting a phone call. "John calls me and says, 'Jake, I've got to talk to you. I'm here with Zal Yanovsky, and we've been talking with Bob Cavallo. And we want to get together and see what happens.' So they came back up from Washington, met in my apartment and within an hour Bob and I were partners."

Finding a compatible rhythm section in folk-infested Greenwich Village was not the easiest of tasks, but the problem would be solved via the Long Island rock'n'roll group The Kingsmen (not to be confused with the Louie Louie hitmakers), featuring drummer Joe Butler and bassist Steve Boone. Taking their name from Mississippi John Hurt's Coffee Blues, the Lovin' Spoonful was soon official.

John Sebastian: "When we went down to the Night Owl [a cafe, in Greenwich Village] to play, just the two of us, I quickly saw that

"ZALLY WOULD BE MUGGING AT THE AUDIENCE MAKING IT SILLY, MAKING IT FUN."

JOHN SEBASTIAN

Zally had this flamboyant quality, which was so different from the folkie approach. For the first half a year or so I just stared at my feet while I played, while Zally was this great kind of includer. He'd be mugging at the audience and crossing his eyes when he played, making it silly and making it funny and taking the wind out of these kind of blustery guitar players. He'd play the same thing as the blustery guitar players, only he'd cross his eyes and stick his tongue out."

Within months, several key events occurred: first, the quartet recorded four tracks for Jac Holzman that emerged a year later on *What's Shakin'*, a famous Elektra compilation also featuring others on their way to greater things – the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Eric Clapton & The Powerhouse, Tom Rush and Al Kooper. "We did those tunes for Jac Holzman in exchange for amplifiers," remembers Sebastian. "Jac was like, 'After we record this, I'm not gonna put it out for a year. Because I figure in a year you guys are gonna start to get huge. And when that happens, I'm gonna have a chip that I can cash in.'"

No less important was a residency at the Night Owl, where the Spoonful's rhythms, twang and good time music would ➢

Opening spread Henry Diltz; Getty

The weekend starts here: The Lovin' Spoonful on Ready Steady Go!, 1967.

> blossom in front of an audience. "We were working essentially for beatniks who were left over from the previous incarnation of the Night Owl, where jazz and beat poets would recite angry poetry over jazz," says Sebastian. "People would snap their fingers at the end of a tune. It sounds like a bad '50s beat movie or something, but that's really what it was like. And then one night we looked up and there was a beautiful little 16-year-old girl from Queens dancing in a totally different way. Dancing like flower-power dancing. And we knew that our audience had found us. And I went home that night and wrote Do You Believe In Magic."

FINALLY, THANKS TO THE POP EPIPHANY OF DO You Believe In Magic – and the persistence of Erik Jacobsen – the Spoonful landed a full-fledged record deal. But it did not come easily. After recording the song at a session that featured friend and future Spoonful member Jerry Yester on piano, the band and Jacobsen could not find a home for it. After six months, the solution came via an encounter with music biz big-shots-to-be Charles Koppelman and Don Rubin.

"Everybody turned it down, from Columbia right on through," says Erik Jacobsen. "Nobody heard it, nobody liked it, we were broke, I was evicted from my apartment, and we wandered into Koppelman and Rubin's office. They loved it, so we kind of made a commitment to those guys.

"The floor they were on was the big new office of Kama Sutra Records, who had made a production deal with MGM. We went down the hall and played for the guys at Kama Sutra, and they said, 'Oh, this is going all the way – we'll get you an advance, and we'll give you money.' And so we stupidly went with them."

Hindsight may be everything, but in 1965 this cast of characters was looking forward, not backward. And if the goal of any successful rock'n'roll band was to make hit records, The Lovin' Spoonful met those requirements from the start. In August 1965, Do You Believe In Magic entered the Billboard singles chart, eventually reaching the Top 10; the first of seven consecutive Top 10 singles in 16 months.

In the meantime, the band's live performances were sharpening up due to incessant touring. Cavallo and co knew that getting his band out in front of an audience was the surest way to to win a solid fanbase. In the earliest days, that meant playing high school dances in the Bronx and "little Italian joints in Brooklyn." By the time Magic started to hit, the quartet was in San Francisco playing a topless bar. Finishing a tour of high schools, the band ended up at the Crescendo in LA and got their very first taste of what stardom could mean; to a one-time folkie like Sebastian, the transition was eye-opening.

"It was right across the street from where The Doors were playing Ciro's. And that was our first experience with flower power and groupies and this whole world that we just felt total strangers to. Because, as much as we might've wanted to emulate the success of The Beatles, I think we always assumed our success would be a different kind of a thing.

"We were kind of New York guys," he adds, "and didn't consider ourselves matinee idols or anything. We thought the audiences wouldn't scream, they'll just kind of bob their heads and, you know, it'll be nice.

"And then we played the Rose Bowl with The Beach Boys, Bobby Fuller Four and Herman's Hermits – a real screamfest. We actually drove into that gig in a convertible, unimpaired. They had some crappy Beatle amplifiers that we hated and we do the four tunes and the audience goes fucking *nuts*.

"And we get off the stage, we get back into our rent-a-car convertible, and they open the gates, and 65 girls jump into our fucking car. All of us had red rings around our necks where they had been pulling at our shirts, Butler got his St. Christopher medal pulled off, we had scratches from people pulling at our hair and missing.

"We then realised this is awful. This is awful because we're *not* The Beatles, and we felt that every one of those kind of Beatle reactions was merely programming that had happened because of the media. It was as if kids had seen this and then been trained. And here we were trying to get in some Jim Jackson tunes, doing stuff like Wild About My Lovin' and My Gal."

"WE DID FOUR TUNES AND THE AUDIENCE WENT NUTS. IT WAS AWFUL."
JOHN SEBASTIAN

The girl-with-lollipop hits reissues uniformly portrayed the band as a stellar hit-making ensemble but failed to provide the context from which those hits emerged. Even before the band had begun, Sebastian and Yanovsky had long discussions about their planned musical direction and decided it would be solidly American, drawing on the musical roots and influences they'd both grown up with.

That would mean folk, blues, country blues, bluegrass and, of course, the jug band music they would sing about in an album to come. In fact, it was jug player Fritz Richmond, of the Jim Kweskin Jug Band, who had suggested the band take their name from the Mississippi John Hurt song. "We felt we were one step down from them," says Sebastian of Kweskin and friends.

One person who had a bird's-eye view of the sub-Beatlemania surrounding the group was photographer Henry Diltz, who as a member of the Modern Folk Quartet was summoned by friend Erik Jacobsen to New York to become the Spoonful's official photographer. Every weekend, he and his friends would get on a "little charter plane" and fly somewhere in the American Midwest to do concerts.

Alamy

The Spoonful's popularity meant that Diltz's pictures were in extremely high demand. But simple group shots proved the hardest to come by. "The Spoonful had this notion that to be a rock'n'roller you sort of had to be a 'bad boy'," says Diltz. "In other words, they didn't want to co-operate with that bullshit, they didn't want to stand in a group and pose. So I would be begging them, 'Please, just for one minute stand there…' But as soon as I was about to take the picture, Steve Boone would give me the finger, Zal would stick his tongue out, or hide behind somebody else."

In contrast, he recalls the day Mama Cass brought five of her friends over to Zal's apartment – The Hollies, as it happens – who upon discovering Diltz was a photographer, asked if he'd shoot them. "Every time I'd say, How about standing on those steps? Bang! They would all stand on the steps and pose like Vogue models, and instantly get into a group shot. It absolutely blew my mind."

1966 WAS THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL'S BANNER YEAR. The flow of marvellous singles seemed nonstop – Daydream, Did You Ever Have To Make Up Your Mind?, Summer In The City, Rain On The Roof and Nashville Cats – and their two albums, *Daydream* and *Hums Of The Lovin' Spoonful*, were mature, diverse sets that were the polar opposite of the era's standard hits-plus-filler norm.

It was the same year the band recorded their two film soundtracks, and each could not be more divergent: *Tiger Lily* was rocky fare, much in keeping with the band's live performance style; *You're A Big Boy Now*. which bore the hit Darling Be Home Soon, was much more orchestrated, emphasising the strength of Sebastian's melodic compositions rather than the quartet's instrumental abilities.

But all was not well in the Spoonful camp. Many of the tensions centred around Yanovsky, long the live focal point of the band, whose guitar skills weren't always displayed to his advantage. To Jerry Yester, Yanovsky's eventual replacement, one difficulty was Sebastian's "coming into his own as a musician and kind of orgetting the band. He wanted to play the drums on this, and play the drum fills, and hire guitar players, and Zally was saying, 'What the fuck?' He was having Zally playing *chink-chink* on Darling Be Home Soon, and that isn't why Zally got into the group. He was one of the best guitarists in the world at the time, and he's gonna have John tell him to play *chink-chink*?

"So on the Ed Sullivan Show, when they're doing Darling Be Home Soon, Zally's holding up a rubber frog in front of John's face, and mugging and distracting all the attention away from him – just sabotaging the whole performance, and it was with a symphony orchestra behind them and the whole deal." ➢

Half a spoonful (from left): Jerry Yester, Steve Boone, Joe Butler, John Sebastian, 1968.

Those close to the Spoonful also refer to "domestic issues" within the group. "We were all in our early twenties when we started this band," says bassist Boone today, "and we all were living the very carefree bachelor life. And as we came into serious relationships or got married, it pulled us apart from that 'the boys in the band' thing and you become more or less business partners. I think that that's just inevitable as people get older, and it was inevitable for us, too."

Jacobsen: "In almost every situation that I've ever been involved in with a male artist who's doing any good, a girl can come in, and the girl will start giving her opinions."

Add Yanovsky to this scenario, and the picture becomes clearer. "Zal was a very zany, humorous, wild, kind of almost gorilla-type guy," says Jacobsen. "He was wild. He had a bunch of plastic animals that somebody had given him, jelly animals, which he kept in the freezer, and for fun he would take them out and you could break pieces off them. And then also he'd heat coat hangers and burn these jelly things. He was a little bit demented – it's a strong word, but I have to say it.

"What happened was, when he was casting about, he got with this girl for a short period of time who later ended up with John [Loretta Kaye, who married Sebastian in 1966; the couple separated two years later]. This was bad, because whenever there was any tension whatsoever, Zal could not pass by the opportunity to make some kind of innuendo or joke at John's expense. And John was a very kind of quiet, soft-spoken, slow-talking guy in comparison with Zal, who was just firing them off right and left."

Yanovsky's wisecracks were not directed solely at Sebastian, adds Jacobsen. Yanovosky and drummer Butler "had a little bit of animosity", he notes, while manager Cavallo was awarded the nickname BFB, short for Big Fat Bob.

Whether the late '66 pot bust in San Francisco involving Yanovsky and Boone was the last straw for the guitarist may be debatable, but that the entire affair was enormously dispiriting to all parties isn't. In brief, faced with the immediate deportation of Yanovsky if his pot supplier wasn't named, the group turned in the culprit, believing there might be a way for everyone to emerge from the unpleasantness unscathed. There wasn't.

"What we had figured was, Hey, we've got some hit records, we can buy this guy a good lawyer," says Sebastian. "The guy refused the lawyer, and then the lawyer *he* hired decided that this was the opportunity to make pot legal in San Francisco and got the guy a couple of months in jail. And, you know, it felt horrible. I mean, one week Zally's the ultimate hippest guy in the country, no exceptions. Next week, he's a fink. It was just crushing."

BY JUNE 1, 1967, ZAL YANOVSKY WAS OUT OF THE Lovin' Spoonful. His last performance with the group was in Forest Hills, New York, and among those who saw it was his immediate replacement and old friend Jerry Yester. "Zally became a totally destructive machine," he recalls. "He would sabotage every performance, turn up three times as loud as he should have been, just not even care how he played. I saw their last performance and it was abominable. Zally was the pits, everybody was the pits. Just sad."

Bassist Boone was the only person in the Spoonful camp who didn't want Yanovsky gone. "Zally and I were very close," he says. "We called ourselves the Death Duo. I was really quite concerned

Getty

that this was going to affect our chemistry. But when it came down to the vote, I was outvoted and Zally left."

Yanovsky's departure was, in an odd way, amicable: he and Sebastian still lived across the street from each other; he and Jerry Yester would co-produce his excellent solo album *Alive And Well In Argentina* (which included the Sebastian-penned Priscilla Millionaira); and when Henry Diltz took publicity stills of the new Spoonful at Yester's Long Island house, Yanovsky posed in the background. "They'd be standing in front of a barn and Zal would be peeking out a window behind them," says Diltz. "Or he'd have the barn door open a crack and he'd have his eyes and nose peeking out. It was just so funny. Zal just didn't stop."

The last Spoonful LP to feature John Sebastian was 1968's *Everything Playing*, notable for being one of the first albums to be recorded on 16-track. An underrated set, it is highlighted by Jerry Yester's skills as an arranger as much as it is handicapped by an unfinished-sounding mix – the result of producer Joe Wissert dropping out towards the end of the project. Aside from such Sebastian tracks as Six O'Clock, Darling Be Home Soon and Younger Generation, the disc featured songs by Butler and Boone (and Yester as co-writer). By then, it was becoming obvious to all parties that the Spoonful had run their course.

"There was a feeling of whipping a dead horse among everybody," notes Jerry Yester. "*Everything Playing* as an album was fun to make. But when it came to doing it live, performing… We were rehearsing at the Cheetah one afternoon, rehearsing Only Pretty, What A Pity and John just had a snit, saying, 'I don't want to do this song, I hate this song.' You know, because it wasn't his song *[it was a Butler/Yester composition]*. I really think that's what it was. Because I do think it's a good song."

Sebastian's overall dissatisfaction with the Spoonful continued to gnaw at him. "I was beginning to feel like I was missing something," he says. "I had very good friends in my time before the Spoonful who were all working either as sidemen or accompanists and who were now becoming quite visible. Among them were Dallas Taylor and Steve Stills, and the various guys in that band, and I began to think, Gee, what would it be like if I could make an album where I could just call on all of those great players? Whatever strong suit the Spoonful had, it certainly was not a group that could play certain kinds of grooves. I began to have an incentive to push away from the band format."

In mid-1968, John Sebastian told the Lovin' Spoonful he wanted to leave the group. Normally, when a band's central singer/songwriter departs, it means the band is over. Not so here, though. "Between the other three guys, they were still pretty gung-ho," says Sebastian. " I said, 'Look, here's what I can do. I'll never call anything I do the Lovin' Spoonful. How about that? How about you guys have the name? I take my ball and go home and you guys have the name.' And that was, I think, an agreeable way of parting company."

The remaining trio of Butler, Boone and Yester released one more single in July 1968 – sung by Joe Butler, it was a cover of John Stewart's Never Going Back featuring Stewart himself – before tapering off. "It was not a big success," notes Boone. "And at that point, everybody more or less decided to suspend touring."

STILL, A FINAL LOVIN' SPOONFUL ALBUM WAS TO come – or, rather, one by 'The Lovin' Spoonful featuring Joe Butler'. *Revelation: Revolution '69* contained the final two Spoonful singles, Never Goin' Back and Me About You, and a memorable album sleeve depicting Butler and a woman, both naked, and a lion, running.

"The record company had owed us another payment, an advance, and they insisted we do an album," says Butler. "Steve, Jerry and I were going to try to get Zally. But then Steve didn't want to do it, Charlie Koppelman knew I could sing, although I was handicapped in that I had to do songs published by Charlie and their publishing company."

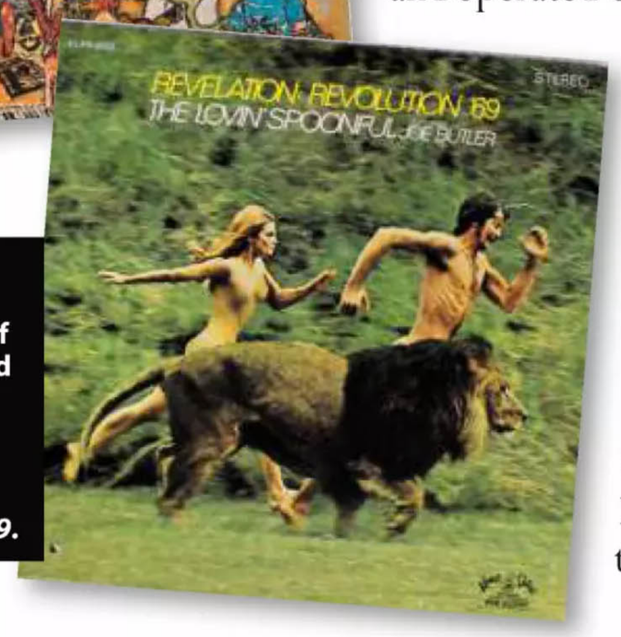
The original four members of The Lovin' Spoonful reunited in 1980 for an appearance in the Paul Simon film *One-Trick Pony* but their most memorable reunion was at the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame Induction in 2000. One would have hoped it would be glorious, but it wasn't. Though Jerry Yester played on the band's first single, as a non-original member, he wasn't allowed to participate. And no one was happy about their scrappy performance, least of all John Sebastian, whose vocals were particularly ragged. It still bothers him.

"I wish I had followed Zally Yanovsky's suggestion," he says. "When they said we want you to play, Zally said, 'Let's be the *Spoonful*, let's play Wild About My Lovin' or My Gal, let's play a jug bad tune.' And we were told, 'Oh no, if you play jug band tune we won't allow it. We want you to play Magic or Summer In The City.' And bad things happened. Joe's foot pedal was not attached when we began that performance. The mix was horrendous, I was immediately just screaming, and my vocals were awful."

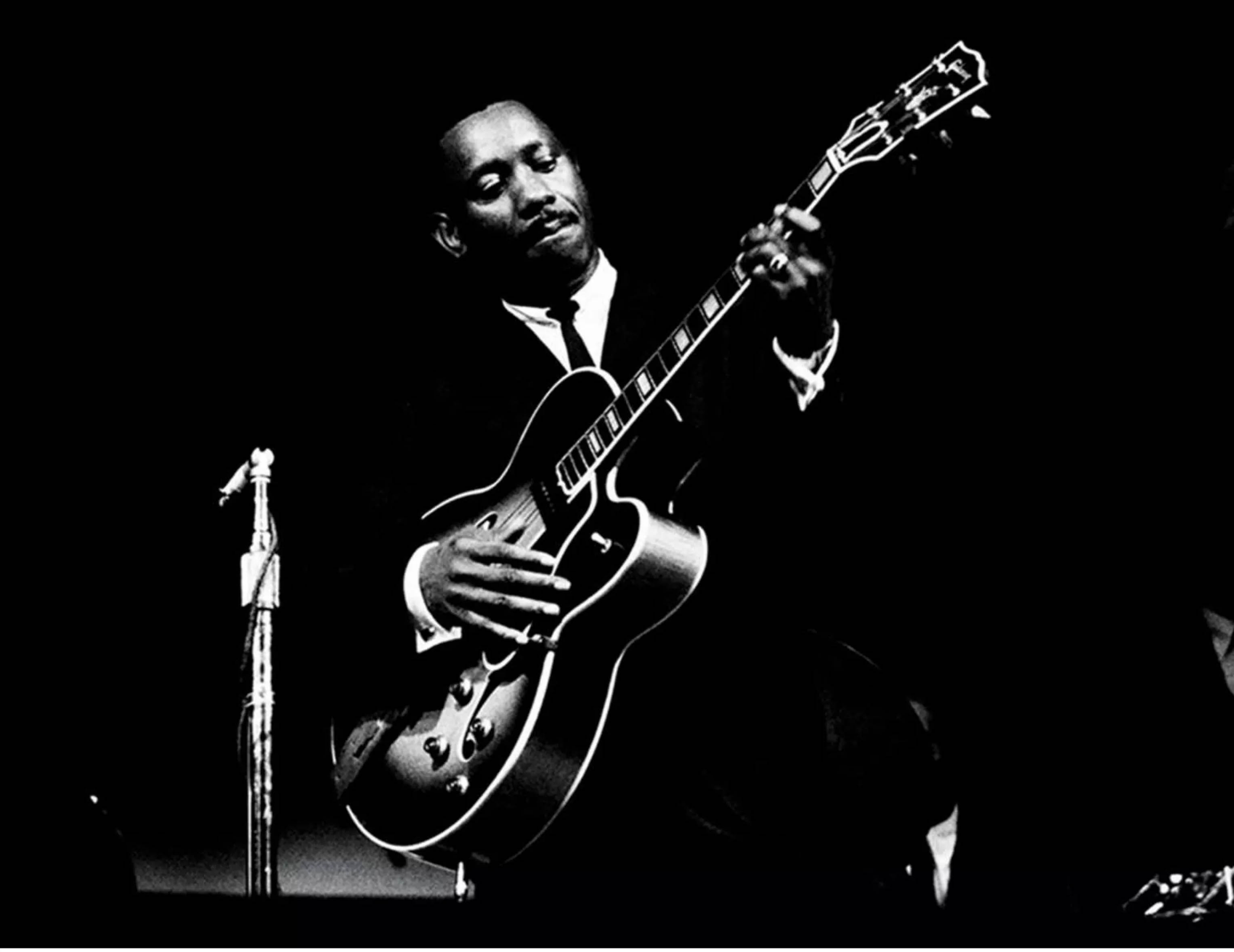
Still, relationships that extend back to those early days in Greenwich Village are not so easily eradicated, nor does anybody want them to be. A version of the Lovin' Spoonful featuring Joe Butler, Steve Boone and Jerry Yester began touring in the early '90s and continues to play today, as does John Sebastian, who was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2008 and tours the US this summer. After releasing his solo album, Zal Yanovsky owned and operated Chez Piggy, a restaurant and bakery in Kingston, Ontario, and before his death in 2002 reunited with John Sebastian to play dates in Scandinavia.

MOJO asks Erik Jacobsen, who went on to manage and produce Chris Isaak, would he have done anything differently with The Lovin' Spoonful? Jacobsen ponders the question, then says, "No, I wouldn't re-do anything. That is just a dreamlike memory, it was a fabulous opportunity to be there. I was lucky. In the right place at the right time. Just like the song says." Ⓜ

"BY 1968, THERE WAS A FEELING OF WHIPPING A DEAD HORSE."
JERRY YESTER



The final spoonful: the last run of Lovin'-related releases, including the 'naked' *Revelation: Revolution '69*.



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Blowin' In The

The Newport and Monterey Jazz festivals celebrated both the music and changing face
Jazz Festival, featuring photographer Jim Marshall's iconic images, turns back the clock

(Left) Wes Montgomery & John Coltrane

Guitarist Wes Montgomery played in John Coltrane's much celebrated quartet at the 1961 Monterey Jazz Festival.

(Below) Dizzy Gillespie

The Be Bop giant enjoys a cigarette and a moment of quiet reflection backstage at Monterey 1961. Gillespie performed that year with pianist Lalo Schifrin.

Wind

of America in the '60s. A stunning new book, to the age of Miles, Dizzy and more.

(Top) Monterey crowd, 1960
Historian Nat Hentoff's essay celebrates the way Jim Marshall photographed "integrated crowds peacefully digging each other's company at a jazz festival".

(Above) Johnny Hodges
Alto sax player Hodges was one of the stars of the Duke Ellington Orchestra at Monterey, 1961.

AS FORMER PRESIDENT BILL Clinton explains in his Foreword to this book, photographer Jim Marshall always offered an "unfiltered look into the world of jazz".

Jazz Festival: Jim Marshall documents a dynamic and vital period in the cultural history of the United States, with its candid photographs from the Newport and Monterey festivals of the 1960s.

It's a record of America in transition; a place where music, politics and race relations were changing. Jazz clubs were one of the few places, even in the north of the US, where blacks and whites mixed without having to worry about social disapproval. In the south, of course, it was still unheard of.

"Outside of the Newport and Monterey jazz festivals, I had never before seen such a large, integrated crowd coming together for a common purpose," writes jazz historian Nat Hentoff in his introduction.

Jim Marshall was right there, taking photos, in the heart of this changing world. Born in Chicago in 1935, Marshall started taking photographs after his family moved to San Francisco. He gained entry into the world of professional photography after a chance encounter with John Coltrane. The saxophonist asked Marshall for directions to a club; Jim said he'd give him a lift there, as long as he could take his picture.

Coltrane was among those who appeared at the Monterey and Newport jazz festivals. The Monterey Jazz festival launched in 1958 after pianist Dave Brubeck wooed the city council with a special performance and persuaded them to grant the festival organisters a licence. Brubeck went on to play the gathering 14 times, and features in Jazz Festival alongside fellow giants such as Dizzy Gillespie, Buddy Rich, Miles Davis and Louis Armstrong.

The Newport Jazz festival in Newport, Rhode Island was first staged in 1954. Marshall's photographs of Nina Simone, John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins, among others, from 1963 are included in the book, alongside wonderful pictures of a generation of jazz-loving young Americans.

Jazz Festival: Jim Marshall is a celebration of the golden age of '60s music and a deeply atmospheric snapshot of the times. Bill Clinton says it best: "Every shot radiates authenticity."

© Jim Marshall Photogrpahy

Gerry Mulligan

Baritone saxophonist and arranger Mulligan aired his new 'Concert Jazz Band' at Monterey in 1960. The group had a core of 13 or more musicians.

Odetta

The folk blues pioneer, born Odetta Holmes, played Monterey in 1960 and would prove a huge influence on the next wave of '60s folk singers, including 1965 Monterey performer Joan Baez.

(Above) Gerald Wilson & The All-Star Orchestra

Trumpeter and big band leader Wilson wrote arrangements for Ray Charles and Billie Holiday, among others, and wowed the audience at the 1962 Monterey festival.

(Left) Monterey, 1960

Writing in Jazz Festival, co-author Graham Marsh describes Monterey and Newport as rare places where "black culture was openly embraced and integrated audiences were the norm".

© Jim Marshall Photogrpahy

JAZZ FESTIVAL: JIM MARSHALL

Jazz Festival: Jim Marshall, with a Foreword by President Bill Clinton and an Introduction by historian Nat Hentoff, features many previously unseen pictures of such jazz icons as Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Nina Simone and many more, and is published by Real Art Press in September. Go to www.reelartpress for more information and to order a copy of this book.

Daddy Cool

Convicted killer, preacher, teacher, myth, Son House helped create the blues before vanishing into ordinary life. Charles Shaar Murray uncovers the tale of how a bunch of blues enthusiasts rediscovered the man who influenced it all, from '60s folk to garage rock.

SON HOUSE, ACCORDING TO MUDDY WATERS, who ought to know, "was the daddy". Convicted murderer, part-time preacher, chronic alcoholic and a key figure in both the pre-war Delta pantheon and the '60s folk-blues revival, Eddie James House Jr, better known as 'Son' House, was a friend and colleague of Charley Patton, and tutor and inspiration to both Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters. And his music is still part of our landscape: almost a century after House's birth, The White Stripes unleashed a majestic version of his Death Letter on their *De Stijl* album. Captain Beefheart offered a characteristically oblique take on the same song on his 1968 *Strictly Personal* album: the opening track Ah Feel Like Ah Cid takes House's opening line, "I got a letter this morning, what d'you reckon it read?" and continues, "Red, blue and green, all around my head." ➢

One man band: Son House, New York Folk Festival, Carnegie Hall, July '65.

➢ The astonishing influence Son House wielded is demonstrated by a reference to just one of his many songs. My Black Mama (Pt 1) was developed from materials learned from an unrecorded older singer named James McCoy, and cut during Son's very first recording session in 1930. Its primal slide-guitar motif provided the basis for Robert Johnson's Walkin' Blues; the lyrics for the second verse ("Ain't no heaven, ain't no burnin' hell/Where I go when I die, can't nobody tell") provided the inspiration for Burnin' Hell, one of John Lee Hooker's most powerful songs, and those of the third verse ("My black mama's face shines like the sun/Lipstick and powder can't help her none") reappeared virtually intact – except for the word 'black' – in Albert King's Oh Pretty Woman as well in subsequent versions of King's song by John Mayall and Gary Moore. The fourth verse ("If you see my milk cow, tell her 'hurry home'/Ain't had no milk since my milk cow's been gone") recurred four years later in Kokomo Arnold's Milk Cow Blues and spread from there to Robert Johnson's Milk Cow's Calf Blues and Elvis Presley's Milk Cow Blues Boogie. Even The Kinks recorded Milk Cow Blues as part of a 1967 live medley with Ray Davies' own Tired Of Waiting For You and a quick burst of the Batman theme. Isn't the folk process wonderful?

Muddy Waters once defined his style as a mixture of Son House, Robert Johnson and himself. "I had part of my own, part of Son House and a little part of Robert Johnson – really, it was Son House who influenced me to play. I was really behind Son House all the way – when I heard Son House, I should have broke my bottleneck. Played this same place for about four weeks in a row, and I was there every night. You couldn't get me out of that corner, listening to what he was doing. I thought Son House was the greatest guitar player in the world when I heard him because he was usin' that bottleneck style, and I loved that sound, man."

The astounding thing was that when Muddy first saw House perform in 1929, Son had only been playing guitar for two years.

> **"I was behind Son House all the way. I thought he was the greatest guitar player in the world."**
> **Muddy Waters**

SON HOUSE WAS BORN IN RIVERTON, Mississippi, on March 21, 1902, and raised in Louisiana, near New Orleans. By the time he was 15, he'd begun preaching, though his relationship with the church, like those of many other bluesmen, was a vexed and complex one. His song Preaching (the) Blues, which he liked well enough to record at several different stages of his career, famously began, "I'm gon' get religion, I'm gon' join the Baptist church/I'm gon' be a Baptist preacher, and I don't want to have to work." Nevertheless, he shifted back and forth many times between the blues and the church, and by the end of his career he was performing blues and spirituals in more or less equal measure.

Returning to Mississippi in the mid-1920s, he began learning guitar rudiments from local guitarist Willie Wilson, who played bottleneck style. The acquisition of his first guitar was followed fairly rapidly by conviction for murder and a sentence of 15 years in the notorious Parchman State Farm penitentiary after shooting a man in a barroom brawl. Intercession by his parents got him released after serving only a couple of years. The evidence is that he'd managed to do some serious work on his guitar playing by then, because he began moving in some fast musical company: he teamed up with one Willie Brown, later running buddy to Robert Johnson and immortalised in the lyrics to Johnson's Crossroad Blues.

Son's first recordings were made during a single marathon session for Paramount Records in Grafton, Wisconsin, commencing on May 28, 1930. He'd travelled up there with Charley Patton, whom he'd recently met through a mutual friend Willie Brown, who was also along for the ride, together with the lead singer of a gospel group booked for the same session, and Patton's girlfriend, pianist Louise Johnson. Patton and Johnson had a row en route, and Johnson transferred her affections to House, which may possibly have added a frisson of tension to the sessions.

Son recorded a total of nine tracks in Grafton. Three of them were 'two-parters': long songs split into two in order to conform to the three-minute time limit of the 10-inch 78rpm singles of the time. My Black Mama, Dry Spell Blues and Preachin' Blues, all double-siders, provided the foundations of his legend, and earned him the sum of $40. Paramount later released a fourth single, Clarksdale Moan/Mississippi County Farm Blues, but no copies appear to have survived. A ninth track, an early version of Walkin' Blues with second guitar by either Patton or Brown, made it as far as a test pressing, but didn't surface publicly for decades.

And that seemed to be it for Son House's recording career. The Depression was kicking in, and as depressions will, was hitting the poorest hardest. The rural blues recording industry cut back, and Son House – whose records made little large-scale commercial impact – got cut back right with it. He continued to gig locally around Robinsonville, Mississippi, with Willie Brown, but he kept a roof over his head by driving a tractor while passing on his music to youngsters like Muddy Waters and Robert Johnson, both of whom learned the My Black Mama slide riff from him first-hand. It was Son who originally taught Muddy both standard and open guitar tunings, and made him his first bottleneck.

"Originally [Robert Johnson] was a good mouth-harp player," House told writer Lawrence Cohn. "When he was about 16 or 17, he used to sneak out to try to play with me and Willie [Brown]. He used to follow us around, and he didn't like to work. Especially in the fields. He used to sit and watch my hands, like I did with Willie Wilson, when I played. When we were playing I took a break he'd pick up my guitar and try to play it. He made some pretty awful sounds. I used to tell him to stop before the people got mad and run us all off.

"After a while I believe Robert ran away from home and he came back about six months later with a guitar on his back. He kept begging me and Willie to let him sit in. We told him to stop bothering us because he knew that he couldn't play. Well, we finally let him and he really knocked us out. He could really play by then.

"The women all liked Robert. He was a good-looking boy, and after he got good enough to perform, I used to tell him, When a gal pats you on the shoulder and says, 'Play it again, daddy!', don't get too excited! She'll probably belong to someone else and you might get yourself killed!" In terms of the way events turned out for Po' Bob – supposedly poisoned by a jealous husband – he should probably have listened a little more carefully to his Uncle Son.

More than a decade separated Son House's first two recording sessions. He didn't see the business end of a microphone again until August 1941, when Alan Lomax cut five tracks with him on behalf of the Library Of Congress, returning in July the following year to cut a further 10, this time for the archives of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. For the 1941 sessions House was accompanied by Willie Brown, plus harp and mandolin players; in 1942 he worked solo. If $40 seems a poor reward for the Paramount sessions, House's musical economy certainly wasn't improving: this time all he got were a few glasses of Coca-Cola. ➢

Michael Ochs Archive

FLASH FORWARD MORE THAN 20 YEARS, SON years. Son House is now living in Rochester, New York, working as a barbecue chef, school janitor and railroad porter. He performed but rarely over these years and, after the death of Willie Brown, in 1956/7 he'd quit playing altogether. By the time a posse of young white blues fans – Dick Waterman, Nick Perls and Phil Spiro – tracked him down in 1964, after a long circuitous hunt through the Mississippi Delta (maybe they should have just asked Alan Lomax, who knew where he was all along), he no longer even owned a guitar.

Son's rediscovery coincided with that of another 1930s legend, Nehemiah 'Skip' James. Among country blues buffs, anticipation ran high when both were booked to play the 1964 Newport Folk Festival. For years, Skip James and Son House had been merely spectral voices on scratched old records treasured as holy relics by collectors. Now, they emerged from the mists of myth, legends magically made flesh.

Though their paths had never crossed before Newport, Skip and Son were almost exact contemporaries. They had been born within a few months of each other in 1902, in small Mississippi hamlets within a few miles of each other. They made their classic early recordings a mere year apart (House in 1930, James in 1931) for the same company (Paramount), and in the same location (Grafton, Wisconsin). Both had subsequently abandoned professional music-making. Oddly enough, they were 'rediscovered' within a few days of each other by two cliques of the same informal network of scholars and aficionados – House working his odd jobs in upstate New York, and James recuperating from surgery in a veterans' hospital in Mississippi – and were reintroduced to live performance at the same Newport festival: House on the main stage, and James at what Samuel Charters has described as a "blues workshop on a cold and damp Saturday afternoon".

Beyond that, they were as different as any two Mississippian singer/guitarists could possible be. Son House was virtually a founding father of Delta blues: he had learned from, and travelled with, Charley Patton himself, and had in his turn mentored and tutored both Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters. Hammered out on a freshly acquired steel-bodied National guitar and sung in wracked, grainy chest tones, House's music was muscular and overwhelmingly physical, as solidly rooted in the soil and stone of his home state as a mountain or a tree.

James, by contrast, was utterly *sui generis* and represented no significant school, movement or tradition: similar musical devices were indeed used by other bluesmen in and around his native Bentonia. But in terms of artistic achievement or critical acclaim, they hardly represented a peer group. Uniquely unsettling and evocative, he sang in a spooky, brooding falsetto and picked a minor-tuned guitar: his music was as ectoplasmic and eerie as wind through branches. Both men had influenced Robert Johnson – House through direct contact, James through his records – and their twinned legacies embody the mesmerising conflict at the heart of Johnson's music: if Johnson's music evokes a tree twisting in the wind, then House was the tree, and James was the wind. With two such men on board, it should have come as no surprise, that year, that Vanguard didn't even bother to record regular festival stalwarts like John Lee Hooker or Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee.

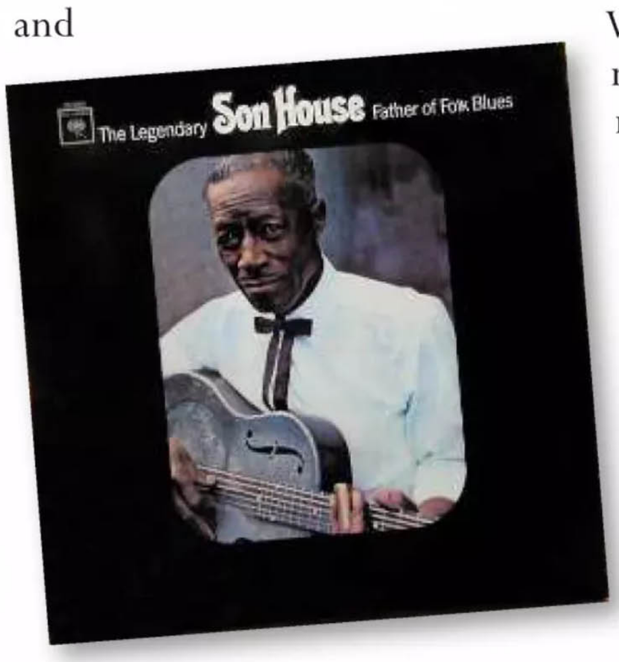
The posse which tracked down Skip James included a young Californian guitarist named Henry Vestine; in the same car was John Fahey, a guitarist/musicologist with proven credentials in that area since, in 1963, he'd helped find Booker T. Washington White, another 'missing' Delta great of the 1930s who was better-known – to his lasting annoyance – as 'Bukka' White, and who just happened to be B.B. King's uncle.

By 1964, Son House was living in New York, and had been working as a barbecue chef, school janitor and railroad porter. He performed rarely and no longer even owned a guitar.

Fire and brimstone: Son House, London, Hammersmith Odeon, 1967.

Among Fahey's circle was one Alan Wilson, a Boston-born prodigy working simultaneously on a university degree in music and on developing a formidable theoretical and practical mastery of country blues guitar and harmonica. Pudgy, moonfaced and myopic as he was, Al Wilson was certainly no glamour boy, but he ended up coaching Son House for his return to public performance.

Like most elder bluesmen who create – and recreate – their music afresh each and every time they pick up their instruments, House had paid little attention to the precise details of his each and every recorded performance; and since he had not played for decades, he was incredibly rusty. Like most young white blues devotees, Wilson was intimately familiar with each and every nuance of House's classic recordings but, unlike most of his contemporaries, Wilson possessed the musical skills necessary to reproduce those nuances himself.



In The History Of The Blues, Francis Davis quotes Dick Waterman's exploration of the resulting paradox: "[Wilson] sat down with Son, knee to knee, guitar to guitar, and said, 'OK, this is the figure that, in 1930, you called My Black Mama,' and played it for him. And Son said, 'Yeah, yeah, that's me, I played that.' And then Al said, 'Now about a dozen years later, when

Getty

Mr Lomax came around, you changed the name to My Black Woman, and you did it this way.' And Son would say, 'Yeah, yeah, I got my recollection now, I got my recollection now.' And he would start to play, and the two of them played together. Then Al would remind him of how he changed tunings, and played his own Pony Blues for him. There would not have been a rediscovery of Son House without Al Wilson. Really. Al Wilson taught Son House how to play Son House."

And when House cut his magnificent *Father Of Folk Blues* comeback album for producer John Hammond in April the following year, Wilson was never far from his side in the studio, functioning simultaneously as coach, cheerleader and harp-and-guitar back-up man. Vestine, in the meantime, had returned to California, spending a few grievously miscast months with a prototype line-up of Frank Zappa's Mothers Of Invention. Soon Wilson was to head west to join him in the formation of a band which would – in honour of a 1928 Tommy Johnson song – eventually be known as Canned Heat.

Son House continued to perform and record for another few years, but the *Father Of Folk Blues* album remains the last manifestation of the astonishing power he could command in his prime. Leading off with Death Letter and including his monumental a capella performance of the spiritual John The Revelator, this magisterial session demonstrates that the giant in twilight could still shine.

By the mid-1970s, House had retired for the final time. He had family in Detroit, and he stayed with them, finally reconciled to the Baptist church, until his death on October 19, 1988. He changed the world, and was never adequately rewarded for it. Nevertheless, he made great music, and was the cause of much great music made by others. Whenever blues meets rock – from Elvis Presley to The White Stripes – somewhere in there is a little echo of Son House.

So it was Son what won it. Not in terms of money, fame or even an easy life. But in terms of creating art which changes people's lives for the better: the only way that ultimately really counts. Ⓜ

MYSTERY GIRL

With the misty, haunting Ode To Billie Joe, Bobbie Gentry became one of the most successful country performers of all time. Powerful, intelligent, beautiful, she had it all. Then in the late '70s she turned her back on the world. Holly George-Warren went on her trail.

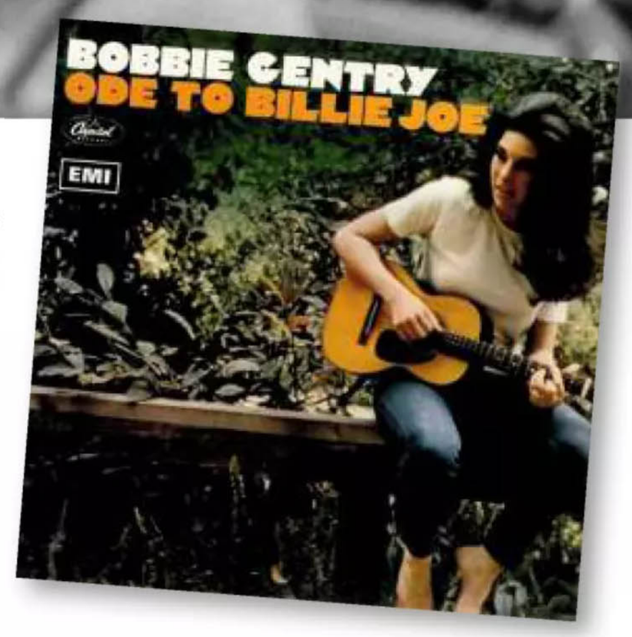
Alamy

Family affair: Bobbie Gentry with her grandparents, Mr and Mrs Streeter, Chickasaw County, Mississippi, 1967.

"BOBBIE GENTRY?" SAYS THE Capitol records publicist over the phone. "I'm afraid nothing exists on him in our files."

She is the J.D. Salinger of rock'n'roll, a Mississippi-born singer-songwriter every bit as mysterious as the steamy, Delta-flavoured song from 1967 that made her a star. Gentry never revealed what Billie Joe MacAllister threw off the Tallahatchie Bridge in her most famous song, Ode To Billie Joe, and the song's mystery became its hook. Likewise, Gentry's decision to remain out of the public eye for nearly 40 years – with requests for performances, for recording sessions and interviews going unheeded – has merely served to add to the enigma. When publicists at her former label, Capitol, didn't even know Bobbie Gentry's gender, that's a forgotten star.

Gentry stepped aside from the recording business in 1978 after an 11-year run. Her very contradictions, as well as her rags-to-riches life story, would make her the perfect subject for, well, a Bobbie Gentry song. Her pioneering artistry – bringing the American South to life via masterful songwriting – should have made her a legend. Instead, anonymity and a handful of records are all that exist. It's one of the most successful disappearing acts in music history.



Bobbie Gentry was born Roberta Lee Streeter in rural Chickasaw County, Mississippi on July 27, 1944. Showing her family's Portuguese ancestry, Bobbie Lee, as she was called, was raven-haired with dark, luminous eyes. Her parents, Robert and Ruby, lived a hard existence, which Gentry only ever touched on briefly in interviews: "We didn't have electricity," she once said, "and I didn't have many playthings." Reportedly, her mother wanted a better life and set out for southern California, where she remarried several times.

BOBBIE LEE WAS DRAWN TO MUSIC AS A CHILD. Living in the Delta, she was exposed to blues and honky-tonk, but it was church music that made the real impact on her. "Life in the South is very different from other parts of the country," she said in 1971. "The church was terribly important to us. It was in the church that I learned my music. I'd teach myself to play the piano by watchin' Ginnie Sue, the pianist at the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. Funny thing is she only played the black keys, and I'd sit up in the loft thinkin' that was the only way to play the piano."

Bobbie Lee's supportive grandmother traded a milk cow for an upright piano for her granddaughter, and by the time she was six, Billie could play by ear, picking out tunes like Skater's Waltz that she'd heard on the radio. Pretty soon, she wrote her first song, My Dog Sergeant Is A Good Dog.

Piecing together Bobbie Gentry's pre-music past from the few facts available, it seems that school years were spent with her father in Greenwood, one of the key towns cited as the birthplace of the Delta blues. In 1957, at 13, she joined her mother in Palm Springs. With fortunes somewhat improved, she continued her musical

Getty (2)

education, teaching herself guitar, banjo, bass and vibes, writing songs and playing little gigs at local country-music clubs. Deciding she needed a stage name, she chose Bobbie Gentry, after seeing King Vidor's steamy 1952 cine potboiler Ruby Gentry, starring Jennifer Jones in the title role as a poor white-trash seductress.

After graduating from Palm Valley High School, Gentry set off for nearby Las Vegas, where she found work in a casino, dancing in a Folies Bergère style revue, singing in Vegas clubs on her nights off. In the mid-'60s, she moved to Los Angeles, studying philosophy at UCLA, before transferring to the Los Angeles Conservatory Of Music where she took classes in composition, music theory and arranging. Eventually, a demo she made landed on the desk of Capitol Records A&R man Kelly Gordon, a transplanted Southerner who primarily worked with R&B artists. Gordon caught one of Gentry's club performances and flipped.

Getting her signed to Capitol was no easy matter, however. Senior producer and A&R executive David Axelrod remembers Capitol's head of A&R rejecting Gentry because his strong religious sensibilities wouldn't allow him to get involved in a song he felt was clearly about abortion. "Kelly came into my office one night so choked he could hardly talk," Axelrod remembers, "He said, 'We've got a demo and I know it's real good.' It was Ode To Billie Joe. I said, This is terrific, what's the problem? He said, 'General manager of A&R turned it down.' The guy who owned the song was Larry Shane, one of the biggest independent publishers. I called him up and said, What do you want for this? He said, 'Ten thousand dollars.' I said, Done! I hung up. Happy. Went over the general manager's head. Her stuff was too good not to hear."

Against a backing of spare guitar lines, atmospheric cellos and violin arrangements, Gentry's breakthrough single features her sensual, Southern-flavoured, conversational singing as she details the compelling story of two Delta teenagers who share a dark secret that leads to the boy's suicide and the girl's lifelong bereavement. Ode... was initially released in July 1967 as a B-side to the bluesy swamp-rocker, Mississippi Delta. However, the sides were quickly reversed.

Arranger and producer Jimmie Haskell remembered the night he entered Capitol's Studio C with the unknown Mississippi singer like it was yesterday. In '67, he'd already been in the business for seven years, getting his feet wet playing accordion on the Elvis Presley soundtrack, GI Blues. A classically trained musician, Haskell began doing string arrangements for Capitol in the early '60s, with sessions for Rosemary Clooney.

"Kelly Gordon introduced me to Bobbie Gentry and played me Mississippi Delta. He went through a bunch of tunes for the B-side, where she just sat on a stool and played her guitar, and we came to this one called Ode To Billie Joe. I said, What do you want me to do? He said, 'Just put some strings on it so we won't be embarrassed. No one will ever hear it anyway.' The song sounded to me like a movie – those wonderful lyrics. I had a very small group of strings to fit her guitar playing. I was branching out in my own head for the first time, creating something that I liked because [we thought] no one was ever gonna hear it. Bobbie was rather quiet, observing everything. I seem to recall her making only one comment during the entire recording." In its first week of release in August 1967, Ode sold 750,000 copies, knocking All You Need Is Love off Billboard's Number 1 spot.

"Ode To Billie Joe ruled the airwaves," recalls Rosanne Cash. "I remember long, serious conversations with people about what exactly was thrown from the bridge. We were all very opinionated about that. Her voice as a writer is so real. And her voice always reminds me of Sophia Loren's body – all woman, dark, curvy, seductive, vulnerable."

> "BOBBIE GENTRY'S VOICE ALWAYS REMINDS ME OF SOPHIA LOREN'S BODY: ALL WOMAN, DARK, CURVY, SEDUCTIVE, VULNERABLE." ROSANNE CASH

As Ode To Billie Joe became an international sensation, Gentry, Gordon and Haskell raced back into the studio to capitalise on Ode's success. Since Gentry had plenty of original material, seven of her compositions joined Ode and Mississippi Delta on the debut album, *Ode To Billie Joe*.

"I asked for lyrics and she presented them to Kelly and he presented them to me on cassette," Haskell recalled. "They gave me free rein, so I came up with these thoughts that just popped into my head magically while I was listening to the songs. This time Bobbie was in the studio a bit more, walking around listening to the sounds, going back and forth between the studio and the booth."

With its intimate details, rich descriptions and Southern colloquialisms, the album soared to Number 1 on the Billboard pop chart, where it stayed for two weeks. It also found success in the country market, with a three-week residency at the top spot, and Gentry was asked to co-host the first-ever Country Music Awards in Nashville.

Casting a spell: with Capitol's Kelly Gordon.

GENTRY CONTINUED TO cast her spell. Kelly Gordon – six years Gentry's senior – had fallen madly in love with his discovery, leaving his wife and children for her. The two lived together for a while, but with Gentry constantly travelling, the relationship disintegrated. Gordon died of cancer some six years later at the age of 35; near the end of his life, according to Haskell, he moved into Gentry's guest house, where she cared for him until his death.

With all this success behind them, the Ode team returned to the studio in early 1968. Enlisting horn arranger Shorty Rogers, Gentry and company began recording one of the great, unsung '60s masterpieces. ➢

The Delta Sweete took Ode To Billie Joe one step further. This time, no doubt about it, it was a full-blown concept album. Deep South classics such as Jimmy Reed's Big Boss Man, Mose Allison's Parchman Farm and John D. Loudermilk's Tobacco Road bled into such lushly baroque Gentry compositions as Penduli Pendulum, Jessye Lisabeth, and Courtyard, chamber-pop masterpieces that exude sadness and loss. Yet, despite all of *The Delta Sweete*'s musical and lyrical genius, the public just didn't get it. The album flopped, with the single Okolona River Boat Band only chugging up to Number 54. Unbowed, Gentry gave the Delta another shot on her follow-up, *Local Gentry*, but it too was a chart flop.

Around this time, Gentry and Capitol's hot new male star, Glen Campbell, riding high in '68 thanks to Gentle On My Mind and By The Time I Get To Phoenix, recorded together. Campbell recalled that during the recording sessions (co-produced by Gordon and Campbell's producer Al DeLory), Gentry was "loose as a goose. She wasn't uptight. She was very easy to work with. I came up with some [songs], she came up with some. We sang things we wanted to sing." The Gentry-Campbell take on the Everly Brothers ignited the public's imagination – Let It Be Me and All I Have To Do Is Dream went Top 40 on pop, higher on the country lists, and the album made Number 1 country.

Gentry's work with Campbell had rekindled her stardom, at least in Europe. She scored another UK hit from her next release, 1969's *Touch 'Em With Love*, which sunk without a trace in the States. Bacharach & David's I'll Never Fall In Love Again, which reached Number 1 in the UK, exemplified the lush mood of the album. Cut in Nashville, with a new producer, Kelso Hurston, the album contained only two Gentry compositions, the gospel-tinged Glory Hallelujah, How They'll Sing and the forlorn Seasons Come, Seasons Go. Her UK hit netted her a BBC television show, boosting both her and Campbell's overseas profile.

"Television really kicked things off for both of us," recalled Campbell. "I did her BBC special and it was shown all over the world – Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, everywhere. She did like three specials for the BBC. I started selling records like crazy in Europe and Asia, and she did too – off the strength of that TV show."

Back in the States, Gentry settled for headlining status on the Las Vegas/Reno casino circuit. Performing at glitzy Harrah's in Reno, she met its owner, multi-millionaire car collector Bill Harrah, a man who's been called "the most influential figure in the history of casino gaming in Nevada". In 1969, after a brief courtship, the two shocked their friends by marrying; Gentry was 25, Harrah was 58 (it was his fourth marriage, Gentry's first). The marriage lasted 10 weeks, falling apart after Gentry returned to London to perform. According to Harrah's former wife Scherry Harrah, "[Bobbie] was supposed to be appearing at the Queen's Theatre in London and Tom Jones was on the same bill. She got up about five or six o'clock in the morning for rehearsal, and she thought Bill would stay in bed, but he went down and sat in the back of the theatre and found out that what they were doing on the stage was not in the script. When they went to Stuttgart, Bill called me. I could tell by his voice something was wrong. The next afternoon he was standing in my living room. It was all over."

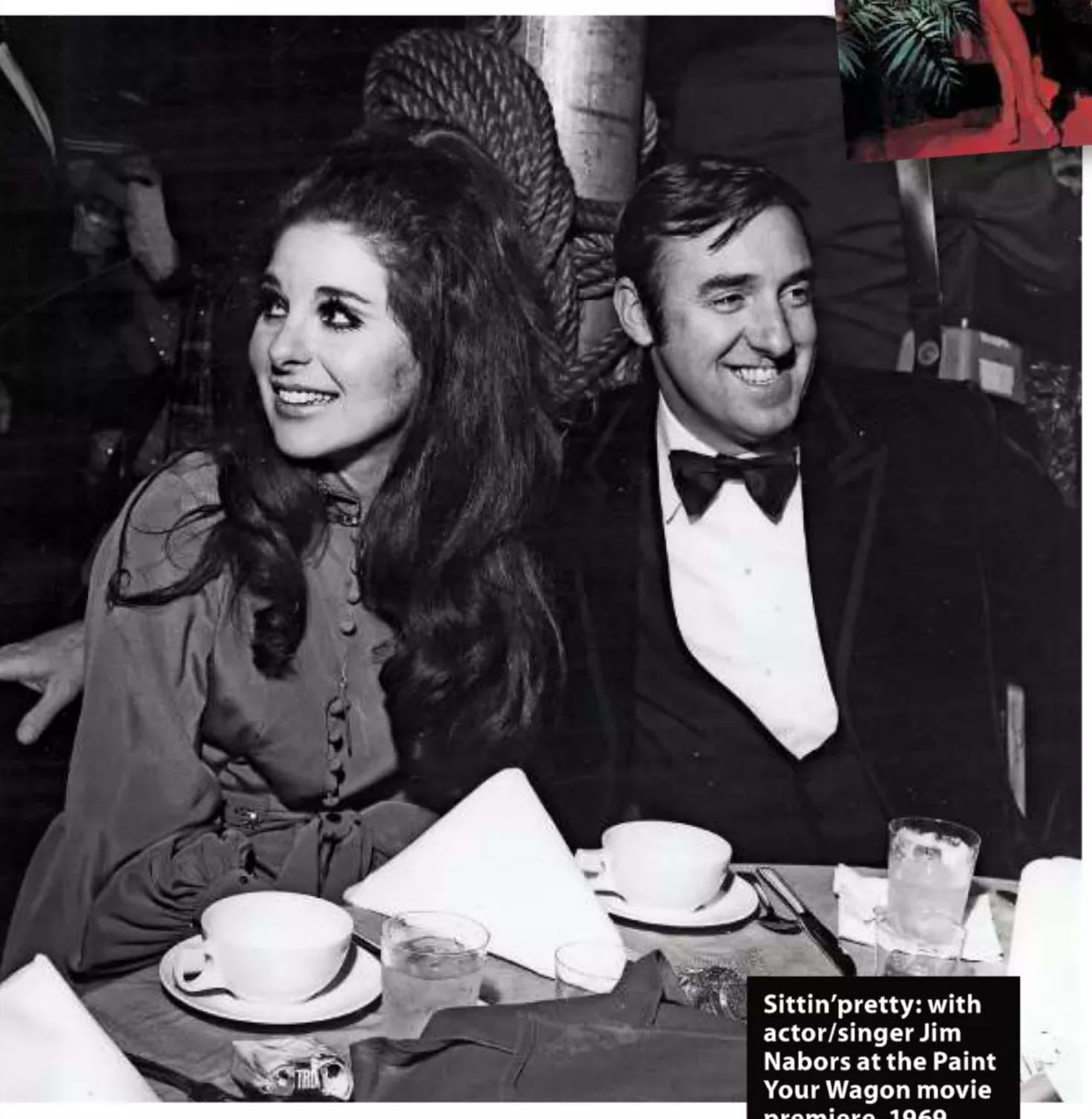
"SHE WAS GREAT LOOKING, FANTASTIC AND OUTSPOKEN, LIKE ONE OF THE GUYS. SHE AND ELVIS GOT ON WELL, AND SHE'D BE UP ALL NIGHT WITH US." TOM JONES

Apparently, Gentry did quite well financially from the divorce. "She told me one time," said Jimmie Haskell, "that her mother had been married several times and that one of those times was to a wealthy man and that the other times they were not wealthy. She said, 'Rich is better than poor. I'm gonna be rich.' I'm quite sure she handled her money very carefully. One time, she had me conduct the Memphis Symphony when she was doing a Pops concert… After the concert I met her mother and her grandmother who said, 'Bobbie, Mr Haskell is such a gentleman. I thought he was excellent.' And Bobbie said, 'He should be for what I'm paying him!' She was always concerned about money." Gentry's next musical move was to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, to work with Rick Hall at Fame Studios.

THE ALBUM, *FANCY*, YIELDED A TITLE TRACK NEARLY as powerful as Ode To Billie Joe, with its tale of beautiful poor white trash Fancy, groomed as a hooker by her sickly mom. Fancy lands a slew of wealthy catches, and ends up in a mansion, with no shame, no regrets. It saw Gentry's sharply drawn lyrics backed by Muscle Shoals' most soulful players. Fancy made Number 31 in the US pop charts.

The next few years found Gentry zigzagging between BBC specials, US Armed Forces radio shows and Vegas. Eventually moving to an exclusive gated community in the area, she signed on to a $150,000 nightclub revue for a reported million-dollar paycheck. She wrote, arranged and choreographed the whole thing.

Tom Jones remembers Vegas as where he really got to know her, when he, Gentry and Elvis would congregate following their Vegas shows. "Elvis would be at the Hilton, I would be at Caesar's Palace, and she would be performing somewhere, and we would get together at night at Elvis's suite at the Hilton," Jones says. "Elvis would always get his backing singers into his suite with an electric piano and we would sing. Bobbie was one of the few other people



Sittin'pretty: with actor/singer Jim Nabors at the Paint Your Wagon movie premiere, 1969.

Alamy (2)

Not unusual: Bobbie Gentry with the host on the set of This Is Tom Jones, 1970.

who was invited into that thing. We'd mostly sing gospel stuff. She was great looking, fantastic, outspoken – but she was more like one of the guys, a star in her own right. She and Elvis seemed to get on well together. She would be up all night with us."

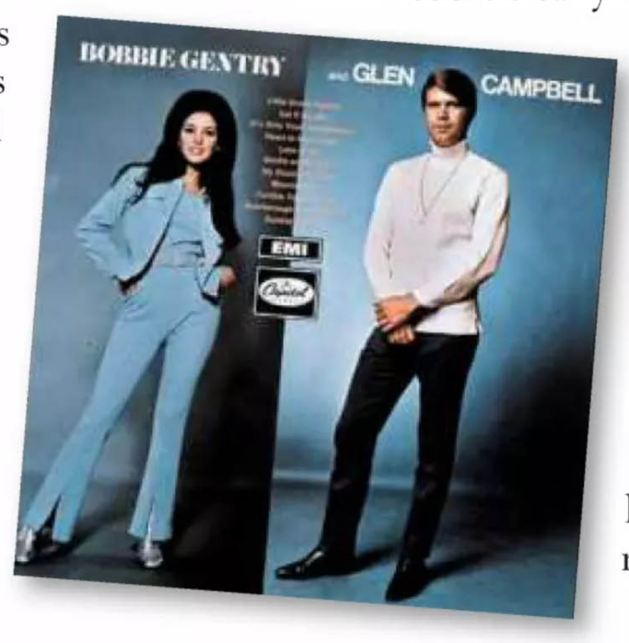
One night, Jones recalls, the topic of songwriting came up. "She asked me why I wasn't writing. I said, I don't think I'm good enough. When I hear songs like Ode To Billie Joe it puts me off. I wouldn't be able to write a song that good. She said, 'It doesn't have to be that good! All my songs are not that good. Think about life, relationships between men and women, and I'm sure you'll come up with something.'"

However, it seems Gentry soon stopped following her own council. Only a minimum of songs surfaced after the release of her last album for Capitol, 1972's upbeat *Patchwork* (unjustly another flop). In 1974, she wrote and sang a blue-eyed soul shuffle for the soundtrack of Macon County Line (starring Leif Garrett). That same year, she hosted a pilot for a variety show, Bobbie Gentry's Happiness, which wasn't picked up. In '75, she travelled home to the set of Ode To Billy [sic] Joe. Directed by Max 'Jethro Bodine' Baer Jr and starring Robby Benson as Billy Joe and Glynnis O'Connor as his girlfriend (named Bobbie Lee), the movie's ad slogan promised: "What the song didn't tell you the movie will!" Gentry's single re-entered the charts upon the film's release.

Her life changed again when, on October 15, 1975, she married singer, songwriter and guitarist Jim Stafford. The couple's stormy union produced a son, Tyler, but Stafford refuses to discuss his ex-wife. Following her divorce from Stafford, Gentry slowly dropped out of sight.

Moving to different parts of the country depending on her son's educational needs, she reportedly spent the 1990s in Georgia, living on the exclusive resort Skidaway Island, perhaps remarried to a wealthy golfer, while Tyler attended school nearby. She then returned to the Los Angeles area, where Tyler attended college, and is now believed to be in Tennessee. All requests for interviews, recordings, and performances are rejected, though Haskell, who died in February 2016, said she called him in the late '90s to write arrangements for a song she was recording. Sadly, he had prior obligations and nothing further happened.

Postings on a Bobbie Gentry website chatboard from family and friends in Mississippi and California have been be intriguing. One said, "It is obvious that many of you have honest and genuine concerns regarding Bobbie's well being and her whereabouts… She seems to live an average lifestyle and appears to be perfectly content with her existence. She is neither in seclusion, nor in hiding Bobbie clearly wants to distance herself from her past, and I thinkI understand her reasons for doing so."



One of her biggest admirers is country blues singer Lucinda Williams, who says, "It was really original stuff. She was writing her own songs and she had this lower, kind of smoky voice. It was kind of country, but it wasn't typical country. It was a blend. I really identified with it."

Now in her early seventies, a comeback for the singer sadly seems unlikely. But the incredible musical legacy she has left guarantees she will always have a small but avid cult of fans waiting for her return – no matter how long it takes. Ⓜ

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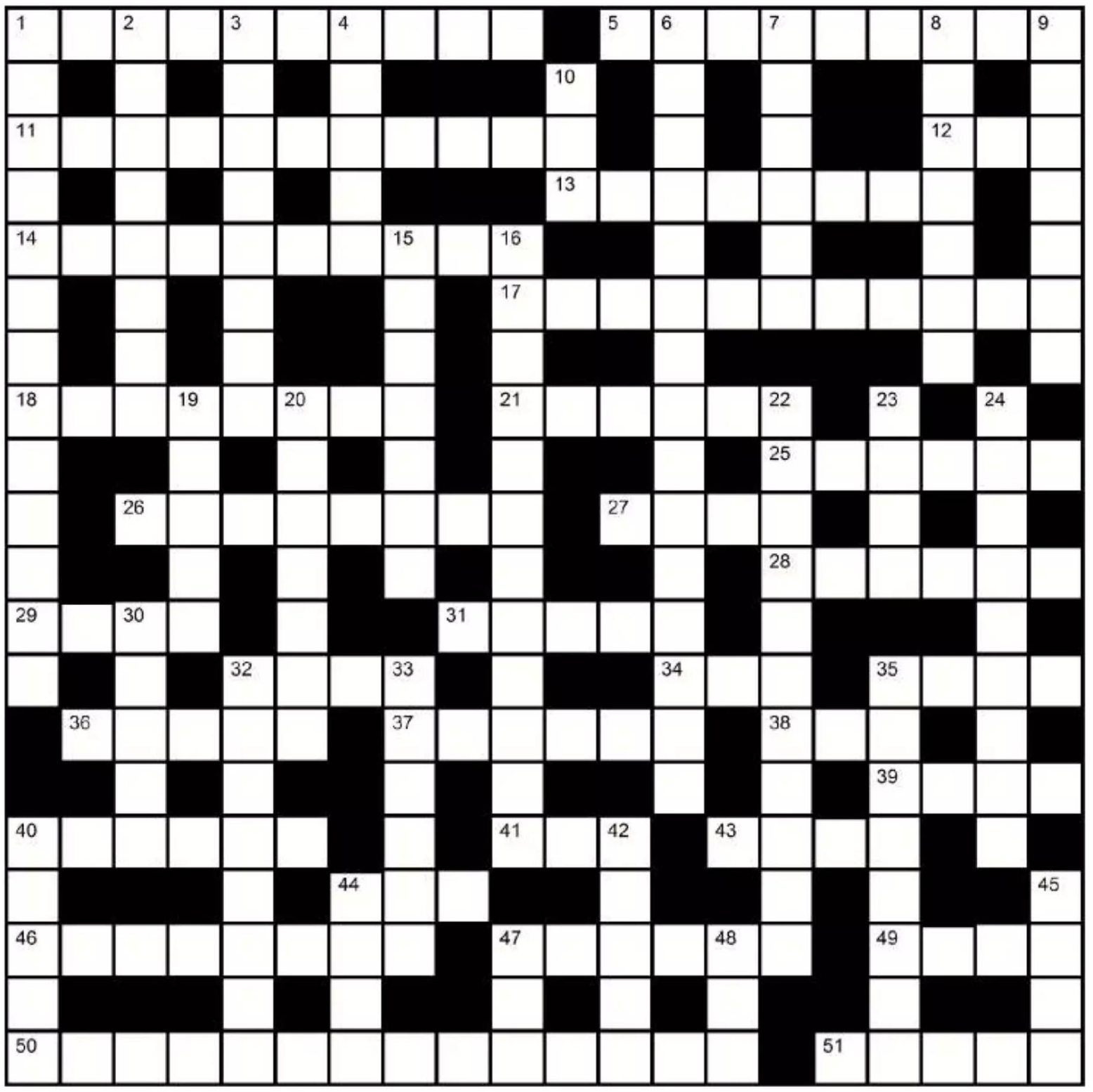
Crossword COMPETITION



ACROSS

1 They made their debut at a Hyde Park free concert in June 1969 (5,5)
5 Fleetwood Mac's bird of good omen (9)
11 Influential guitarist, famed for Angi (5,6)
12 Ask about a music form like Prince Buster's Al Capone (3)
13 Where Brian Wilson and Gary Usher composed a 1963 Beach Boys classic? (2,2,4)
14 Prince Buster produced this Folkes Brothers success in 1960 (2,8)
17 Upset narcoleptic provides one third of Cream (4,7)
18 Herb that helped flavour Simon and Garfunkel's Scarbrough Fair (8)
21 Stevie Winwood stated the obvious on this Spencer Davis Group release (1'1,1,3)
25 They were green but red-hot for Booker T. & The MG's (6)
26 Where Jan and Dean's new girl was located (2,6)
27 Wilson Pickett sang of the midnight kind (4)
28 Bluesbreaker John (6)
29 Flip coin to find 1967's Chelsea Girl (4)
31 ------ Me If You Can (Dave Clarke Five movie) (5)
32 Hand Clappin', Foot Stompin' Funky Butt Washington (4)
34 --- Of Time (Chris Farlowe) (3)
35 Georgie, born Clive Powell (4)
36 They were small and visited Itchycoo Park (5)
37 Prison that hosted Johnny Cash's 1968 live concert recording (6)
38 There was something in it for Thunderclap Newman (3)
39 - --- See For Miles (The Who) (1,3)
40 Fruit repeated twice for a 1966 Neil Diamond hit (6)
41 Could Be Hardin, could be Buckley (3)
43 Velvet Lou (4)
44 A distinctly female song by The Monkees (3)
46 Scott Walker's terrace in blue (8)
47 It was home to The Guess Who and Andy Kim (6)
49 She married John Lennon on March 20, 1969 (4)
50 The Kinks' outstanding weather forecast (5,9)
51 Eddie Floyd did it on wood (5)

DOWN

1 Creedence Clearwater Revival's lunar tune (3,4,6)
2 Label launched by Holland-Dozier-Holland in 1969 (8)
3 Confused Amy Dread provides a Lovin' Spoonful success (8)
4 --- Come She Will (Simon & Garfunkel) (5)
6 Otis Redding's 1968 chart plea (3,2,4,2,4)
7 Weeks connected with an essential Van Morrison release (6)
8 He introduced us to The Son Of Hickory Holler's Tramp (1.1.5)
9 It took four to explain that Big Girls Don't Cry (7)
10 Record company that launched the Harvest label (1.1.1.)
15 He was an Iguana but became Stooge-linked (4,3)
16 Nilsson album that included One, later covered by Three Dog Night (6,6)
19 Spaghetti Western soundtrack provider Morricone (5)
20 Sugar, Sugar they repeated (7)
22 She walked a cat named Dog (5,6)
23 The Who presented pictures of her (4)
24 Album-wise, a relative of The Mothers Of Invention (5,4)
30 ---- To Exist, Charles Manson song rewritten by The Beach Boys as Never Learn Not To Love (5)
32 Be prepared, The Tempations insisted (3,5)
33/45 Did the Stones lose telephone connection with this one? (3,3,4)
35 ------ -- My Mind (Easybeats) (6,2)
40 Progressive folk band formed in 1969 by Roger Wootton and Glenn Goring (5)
42 Matt whose recording of Yesterday was the first single release of the Beatles classic (5)
44 King Of The ---- Guitar (Dick Dale album) (4)
45 See 33
47 Drive My --- (Beatles) (3)
48 Penn, producer of The Letter for The Box Tops (3)

Photoshot

Andy Summers

Soho, London, May 1964

In September 1979, The Police went to Number 1 in Britain with Message In A Bottle. What most of their fanbase didn't know was that guitarist Andy Summers was a '60s veteran. Here he is, aged 21 (second right), with fellow musicians from Zoot Money's Big Roll Band outside the fabled Flamingo in London's Wardour Street.

PA

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